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The Complete Works of
Count Tolstóy

Volume XXIII.

Illustrated Cabinet Edition

MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS AND ESSAYS

By

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FIRST RECOLLECTIONS

1878

FIRST RECOLLECTIONS

(From unpublished autobiographical notes.)

HERE are my first recollections (which I am unable to put in order, as I do not know what was first and what later. Of some of them I do not even know whether they happened in a dream or in reality). I am tied; I want to straighten out my arms, and I cannot do so, and I cry and weep, and the cry is unpleasant to me; but I cannot stop. Somebody is bending over me, I do not know who. All this is in semidarkness. But I remember that there were two of them. My cry affects them: they are agitated by my cry, but they do not untie me, which I want them to do, and I cry louder still. It seems to them that that must be (that is, that I should be tied), whereas I know that it need not be, and I want to prove it to them, and I burst into an irrepressible cry, which disgusts me with myself. I feel the injustice and cruelty, not of men, because they take pity upon me, but of fate, and I feel pity for myself. I do not know and shall never know what it was: whether they swaddled me when I was a suckling babe, and I tried to get my arms free, or whether they swaddled me when I was more than a year old, to keep me from scratching off a scab; it may be that I have brought together a number of impressions, as is the case in a dream, but this much is sure, — it was my first

and most powerful impression of my life. And what I remember is not my cry, my sufferings, but the complication, the contradictoriness of my impression. I want freedom, — it does not hurt anybody, and I, who need strength, am weak, and they are strong.

Another impression is a joyous one. I am sitting in a trough, and I am surrounded by a not disagreeable odour of a substance with which my little body is rubbed. That must have been bran, no doubt, in the water of the trough; the novelty of the impression of the bran awoke me, and I for the first time observed and admired my little body with the visible ribs on my chest, and the smooth dark trough, the rolled-up sleeves of the nurse, the warm, steaming, bubbling, water, and its sound, and especially the sensation of softness in the wet edges of the trough, whenever I drew my hands over them. It is strange and terrible to think that from my birth to three years of age, during which time I nursed, was weaned, began to crawl, walk, and talk, I cannot find any other impression than these two, no matter how much I may rummage in my brain. When did I begin? When did I begin to live? Why is it pleasurable for me to represent myself then, and why has it been terrible, even as it is terrible to many, to represent myself at the time when I shall again enter into that condition of death, from which there will be no recollections expressible in words? Did I not live then, when I learned to look, hear, understand, talk, when I slept, sucked the breast, and kissed the breast, and laughed, and my mother was happy? I lived and lived blissfully. Was it not then that I acquired everything I now live by, and that I acquired so much, so rapidly, that in all my remaining life I have not acquired one-hundredth part of it? From the time I was five years old until now there is but one step. From birth until five years of age there is an enormous distance. From the germ to the new-born child there is an abyss.

And from non-existence to the germ there is not merely an abyss, but incomprehensibility. Not only are space and time and cause forms of reasoning, and not only does the essence of life exist outside these forms, — our whole life is a greater and ever greater submission of self to these forms and then again a liberation from them.

The next recollections refer to the time when I was four or five years old, but even these are few, and not one of them refers to the life outside the walls of the house. Up to five years of age Nature does not exist for me. Everything I remember takes place in my crib, in the nursery. Neither grass, nor leaves, nor sky, nor sun exist for me. It cannot be that I was not given flowers and leaves to play with, that I did not see any grass, that I was not protected against the sun, but up to my fifth or sixth year I have not a single recollection of what we call Nature. Evidently we have to get away from it, to see it, and I was Nature.

The next recollection after that of the trough is the recollection of Ereméevna. "Ereméevna" was a word with which they used to frighten us children. No doubt they had been doing so for a long time, but my recollection of it is this: I am in my crib, and I feel well and happy, as I always do, and I should not have remembered it, but suddenly my nurse or somebody of what constitutes my life speaks in a new voice and goes away, and I feel not only happy, but also frightened. I recall that I am not alone, but that there is somebody else like me. (This was, no doubt, my sister Máshenka, who was one year younger, and whose crib stood in the same room with mine.) I recall that there is a curtain near my bed, and sister and I rejoice and tremble at that unusual thing which has happened with us, and I hide myself in my pillow, and I hide myself and look at the door, through which I expect something new and merry to come. We laugh, and hide ourselves, and wait. And here there

appears some one in a skirt and a cap, as I never saw her before, but I recognize that she is the same who is always with me (my nurse or my aunt, I do not know which), and this some one says in a coarse voice, which I know, something terrible about bad children and about Eremé-evna. I scream for terror and joy and seem to be both frightened and happy at feeling terribly, and I want her who frightens me not to know that I have recognized her. We grow silent, but later again begin on purpose to whisper to one another, in order to call Ereméevna back.

I have a similar recollection of Ereméevna, which, no doubt, belongs to a later time, because it is more distinct, though it has remained for ever inexplicable to me. In this recollection the chief part is played by the German Fédor Ivánovich, our teacher, but I know for certain that I am not yet under his supervision, — hence this takes place before I am five years old. This is my first impression of Fédor Ivánovich. It takes place so early that I do not yet remember any one, neither my brothers, nor my father, nor any one else. If I have any idea about some individual person, it is about my sister, and this only because she, like me, was afraid of Ereméevna. With this recollection there is united my first idea that there is an upper story to our house. How I got there, whether I went there myself, who carried me there, I do not remember about that, but I do remember that there are many of us, that we all hold each other's hands in a circle, that among these there are some strange women (for some reason I know that they are laundresses), and we all begin to whirl about and jump, and Fédor Ivánovich jumps, raising his legs too high and too noisily, and I feel at the same moment that this is not good and is immoral, and I take note of him, and, it seems to me, begin to weep, and everything is over.

This is all I remember up to my fifth year. I do not remember my nurses, aunts, brothers, sisters, or my father,

or the rooms, or my toys. My more definite recollections begin with the time when I was taken down-stairs to Fédor Ivánovich and the older boys.

As I was transferred down-stairs to Fédor Ivánovich and the boys, I experienced for the first time, and so more strongly than ever, the sensation which is called the sense of honour, the sense of the cross which each of us is called to bear. I felt sorry to give up what was habitual (habitual since eternity); I felt sorry, poetically sorry, not so much to part from people, from my sister, my nurse, my aunt, as from my crib, the curtain, the pillow, and I was afraid of the life into which I was entering. I tried to discover something jolly in the life which awaited me; I tried to believe in the kind words with which Fédor Ivánovich tried to entice me; I tried not to notice the contempt with which the boys received me, the younger boy; I tried to think that it was a disgrace for a big boy to live in the same room with girls and that there had been nothing nice in that life up-stairs with the nurse; but I felt frightfully sad, and I knew that I was irretrievably losing my innocence and happiness, and only the feeling of my own dignity, the consciousness that I was doing my duty, sustained my courage. Later in life I have frequently had occasion to experience such minutes on the cross-roads of life, when entering upon a new path. I used to experience calm grief at the irretrievableness of what is lost. I somehow could not believe that this would be. Though I had been told that I should be taken to the boys, I remember that the cloak with a belt sewed on the back, which they put on me, as it were for ever cut me off from up-stairs, and I now for the first time observed, not all the persons with whom I had been living, but only the chief person, whom I had paid no attention to before. This was aunty T—— A——. I remember her as tall, plump, black-haired, kindly, tender, compassionate. As she put on my cloak and fastened

the belt, she embraced me and kissed me, and I saw that she felt, like me, that it was a pity, a great pity, but that it had to be. For the first time I felt that life was not play, but hard work. Shall I not understand the same when I shall be dying? Shall I not understand that death, or the future life, is not play, but hard work?

May 5, 1878.

CHURCH AND STATE

1882

CHURCH AND STATE

FAITH is the meaning given to life; it is that which gives force and direction to life. Every living man finds this meaning and lives upon its basis. If he does not find it, he dies. In the search after it man makes use of everything worked out by humanity. All this which is worked out by humanity is called revelation. Revelation is what helps man to understand the meaning of life. Such is man's relation to faith.

What a remarkable thing! There appear men who do their level best to get people to make use of this, rather than of that, form of revelation; they cannot rest until others will accept their particular form of revelation; they curse, punish, kill all the dissenters they can reach. Others do the same: they curse, punish, kill all the dissenters they can reach. Others again do the same. And thus they all curse, punish, kill one another, each demanding that all should believe just like them. And it turns out that there are hundreds of faiths, and they all curse, punish, and kill one another.

At first I was startled and I marvelled how it was that such an obvious absurdity, such an obvious contradiction, did not destroy faith itself. How could believing people remain in this deception?

Indeed, from the general point of view it is incomprehensible, and it proves incontestably that every faith is a

deception and that all this is a superstition, as is proved by the now reigning philosophy. Looking from the general point of view, I, too, arrived incontestably at the recognition of this, that all faiths are human deceptions. But I could not help but stop at the reflection that the very stupidity of the deception, its obviousness, and yet the fact that all humanity submits to it, — that all that showed that at the base of this deception there was something which was not deceptive. Otherwise everything was so foolish that it was impossible to be deceived. Even the submission to the deception, a submission common to all humanity living a true life, made me recognize the importance of the phenomenon which served as a cause of the deception; and in consequence of this conviction I began to analyze the Christian teaching which served as a foundation for the deception of the whole of Christian humanity.

This was the result from the general point of view; but from the personal point of view, from the one in consequence of which every man and I, too, in order to live, must have faith in the meaning of life, and does have faith, — this phenomenon of violence in matters of faith is still more striking by its absurdity.

Indeed, how, why, for whom is it necessary that another should not only believe, but also profess his faith like myself? A man lives, consequently he knows the meaning of life. He has established his relation to God, he knows the truth of truths, and I know the truth of truths. Their expression may be different, the essence must be one and the same, — we are both men.

How, why, what can compel me to demand of any one that he shall express his truth precisely as I do?

I cannot compel a man to change his belief either by violence, or by cunning, or by deception (false miracles).

Faith is his life, — how then can I take his faith from him and give him another? It is the same as taking his

heart out of him and putting in another. I can do so only when his faith and mine are words, and not what he lives by, — an excrescence, and not a heart. This cannot be done for this reason also, that it is impossible to deceive a man or make a man believe in what he does not believe, impossible, because he who believes, that is, who has established his relations to God and so knows that faith is man's relation to God, cannot wish to establish the relation of another man to God by means of violence or deception. This is impossible, but it is done, has been done everywhere and at all times, that is, it could not be done, because it is impossible, but something has been done which resembles it very much; what has been done is this, that men foist upon others a semblance of faith, and the others accept this semblance of faith, that is, the deception of faith.

Faith cannot be foisted upon any one and cannot be accepted on account of anything: of violence, deception, or advantage; and so it is not faith, but a deception of faith. It is this deception of faith which is an old condition of the life of humanity.

In what does this deception consist and on what is it based? By what is it evoked for the deceivers, and by what does it maintain itself for the deceived? I will not speak of Brahmanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Mohammedanism, in which there were the same phenomena, not because it would be impossible to find the same here: to any one reading about these religions it will be clear that in these faiths the same happened as in Christianity; but I will speak exclusively of Christianity, as of a faith known, necessary, and dear to us. In Christianity the whole deception is built upon the fantastic conception of the church, which is based upon nothing and which from the beginning of the study of Christianity startles one by its unexpected and useless absurdity.

Among all the impious conceptions and words there is

not a conception or word more impious than the conception of the church. There is not a conception which has created more evil than the conception of the church. In reality the word means an assembly and nothing more, and is in this sense used in the gospels. In the languages of all the modern nations the word *ecclesia* signifies a house of prayer.

Beyond these meanings this word, in spite of the fifteen hundred years of the existence of the deception of the church, has not penetrated into any language. From the definitions given to this word by the priests who need the deception of the church it turns out that it is a preface which says: "Everything which I am going to say now is the truth, and if you do not believe it, I will have you burned, and will curse and in every way offend you." This conception is a sophism which is necessary for certain dialectical purposes, and it remains the possession of those who need it. This conception does not exist at all among the people, either among the masses, or in society and in the midst of cultured people, although it is taught in the catechisms. This definition — it is really a shame to have to analyze it, but it has to be done, because so many people give it out so seriously as something very important — is absolutely false. When it is said that the church is an assembly of true believers, nothing is really said (to say nothing of the fantastically dead), because, if I say that an orchestra is an assembly of all the true musicians, I have said nothing, if I do not say what I mean by true musicians. But according to theology it turns out that the true believers are those who follow the teaching of the church, that is, who are in the church.

To say nothing of the fact that there are hundreds of such true faiths, the definition does not say anything, and, it would seem, is as useless as the definition of the orchestra as an assembly of true musicians; but one im-

mediately sees the point of the ear behind all this. The church is true and one, and in it are the pastors and the flock; and the God-ordained pastors teach this true and one doctrine, that is: "Upon my word, everything we are going to say is the truth." There is nothing else. The whole deception is in this, — in the word and the conception of the church. And the meaning of this deception is only this, that there are people who are dreadfully anxious to teach their faith to others.

Why are they so anxious to teach their faith to other people? If they had the true faith, they would know that faith is the meaning of life, the relation to God, established by every man, and that, therefore, it is impossible to teach a faith, but only the deception of faith. But they want to teach. What for? The simplest answer would be that the pope needs cakes and eggs, the bishop — a palace, fish pie, silk vestments. But this answer is insufficient. Such, no doubt, was the inward, psychological impulse for the deception, an impulse which supported the deception; but, analyzing in this manner, how could one man (an executioner) have decided to kill another man, against whom he has no malice? It would be insufficient to say that the executioner kills, because he is given whiskey, a white loaf, and a red shirt; even so it would be insufficient to say that the Metropolitan of Kíev with his monks fills bags with hay, calling them saintly relics, only for the purpose of having an income of thirty thousand roubles. Both actions are too terrible and too contrary to human nature, for such a simple, coarse explanation to be sufficient. Both the executioner and the metropolitan will, in explaining their acts, adduce a whole series of proofs, the chief foundation of which will be historic tradition. "A man must be executed, — men have been executed ever since the beginning of the world. If not I, another will. I will do it, I hope, with God's aid, better than any one else!" Even so will the

metropolitan speak: "External worship is necessary, — saintly relics have been worshipped ever since the beginning of the world. People worship the relics of the Grottoes and have been coming here. If not I, another man will manage things here. I hope, with God's aid, to be able to put to better God-pleasing use the money obtained in a blasphemous manner."

To understand the deception of faith, it is necessary to go to its beginning and source.

We speak of what we know of Christianity. Turning to the beginning of the Christian teaching in the gospels, we find that the teaching directly excludes external divine worship, condemns it, and in particular clearly and positively denies every teachership. But since Christ's time and nearer to our own times, we find a departure of the doctrine from these foundations, as laid down by Christ. This departure begins with the times of the apostles and especially with Paul, the lover of the teachership; and the farther Christianity is spread, the more and more it deviates and adopts those very methods of external divine worship and teachership, the negation of which is so positively expressed by Christ. But in the first times of Christianity the conception of the church is used only as a representation of all those who share the belief which I regard as the true one. The conception is quite correct, so long as it does not include the expression of belief in words, but means the expression of it in one's whole life, since a belief cannot be expressed in words.

The concept of the true church was also used as an argument against dissenters. But previous to Emperor Constantine and the Nicene Council the church is only a concept. Since the time of Emperor Constantine and the Nicene Council the church has become an act, — an act of deception. That deception of the metropolitans with the relics, of the popes with the Eucharist, of

the Iberian Virgin, of the Synods, and so forth, deceptions which, for their monstrousness, startle and frighten us so, begin in nothing but the advantage of these persons. It is an old deception, and it did not begin with the advantages to individual persons merely; there does not exist a man so execrable as to have the courage to do so, if he were the first and if there were no other causes. The causes which led to it were bad. "By their fruit ye shall know them." The beginning was evil, — hatred, human pride, enmity against Arius and others; and another, a still greater evil, was the union of the Christians with the temporal power. The temporal power, Emperor Constantine, who according to the pagan conceptions stands upon the height of human greatness (he is counted among the gods), accepts Christianity, gives the whole nation an example, converts the people, and lends a helping hand against the heretics and by means of an ecumenical council established the one true Christian faith.

The Christian Catholic faith is established for ever. So natural it was to submit to this deception, and up to now people believe in the saving power of this event, whereas it was an event when the majority of Christians renounced their faith. Those were the cross-roads, where the vast majority of Christians took the pagan road on which they continue to travel until the present time. Charlemagne and Vladímir did the same.

And the deception of the church is continued until the present, a deception which consists in this, that the acceptance of Christianity by the temporal power is necessary for those who understand the letter and not the spirit of Christianity, because the acceptance of Christianity without the renunciation of power is a scoffing at Christianity and a corruption of it.

The sanctification of the power of state by Christianity is a blasphemy, a ruin of Christianity.

Having for fifteen hundred years lived under this blasphemous union of putative Christianity and the state, we have to make a great effort, in order to forget all the complex sophisms by means of which the whole teaching of Christ has for fifteen hundred years been everywhere distorted, so as to please the temporal power, to make its peace with the state, by trying to explain the sanctity of the state and its possibility of being Christian.

In reality the words "Christian state" are the same as the words "warm, hot ice." Either there is no state, or there is no Christianity.

To understand this clearly, it is necessary to forget all those fancies in which we are carefully educated, and to ask directly for the meaning of those historical and juridical sciences which we are taught. These sciences have no foundations at all; they are all nothing but an apology for violence.

We shall pass by the history of the Persians, Medes, and so forth, and shall take the history of the state which was the first to form a union with Christianity.

There was a robbers' den in Rome; it grew through rapine, violence, and murder; it conquered the nations. The robbers and their descendants, with their leaders, whom they now called Cæsar, now Augustus, at their head, robbed and tortured the nations for the gratification of their lusts. One of the heirs of these robber leaders, Constantine, who had read a lot of books and had grown weary of his lustful life, preferred certain dogmas of Christianity to his former beliefs, — he preferred the mass to the sacrificing of human victims, and the worship of the one God, with his Son Christ, to that of Apollo, Venus, and Zeus, and ordered this faith to be introduced among those whom he kept under his power.

"Kings rule over the nations, — not thus should it be among you: thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not have riches, thou shalt not

judge, thou shalt not condemn, suffer evil," — nobody told him all that.

All he was told was: "Do you want to be called a Christian and to remain a leader of robbers, — to beat, burn, wage war, fornicate, execute, live in luxury? You may."

And they arranged a Christianity for him, and they arranged it pleasantly, better than could have been expected. They foresaw that, if he read the Gospel, he might come to see that all that was demanded there was a Christian life, and not the rearing of temples and attendance in them. They foresaw this, and carefully arranged for him such a Christianity that he was able, without putting himself out, to live as of old, in pagan fashion. Indeed, Christ, the Son of God, came for the very purpose of redeeming him and everybody else. It was because Christ died, that Constantine could live as he pleased. More than that: he could repent and swallow a piece of bread soaked in wine, and that would be his salvation, and everything would be forgiven.

More than that: they even sanctified his robber's power and said that it was from God, and anointed him with oil. For this he, at their wish, arranged an assembly of the priests, and commanded them to say what should be man's relation to God, and commanded that every man should repeat this.

And they repeated it and were satisfied, and so this faith has existed for fifteen hundred years, and other leaders of robber bands introduced it, and they are all anointed, and everything, everything is from God. (In our country a murderess of her husband, a harlot, was from God, and in France Napoleon was from God.)

And for this the priests are not only from God, but almost Gods themselves, because in them sits the Holy Ghost. And He sits also in the Pope, and in our Synod with its commanders, the officials.

And when an anointed person, that is, the leader of a band of robbers, wants to strike down his own people or a foreign nation, they hurry to make some holy water for him, sprinkle with it the cross (the one on which Christ, having carried it, died for having denied these very robbers), and will bless him in his killing, hanging, chopping off of heads.

All would have been well, but they could not agree, and the anointed persons began to call one another robbers, — which they really are, — and the people began to listen, and stopped believing in the anointed persons and the guardians of the Holy Ghost, and learned from them to call them, as is proper and as they call themselves, that is, robbers and cheats.

But the robbers I only mention in passing, because they have corrupted the cheats. What I have been speaking about is the cheats, the so-called Christians. Such they became through their union with the robbers; nor could it be otherwise. They lost the road the moment they sanctified the first king and assured him that with his violence he was able to aid the faith, — the faith about meekness, self-renunciation, and endurance of insults. The whole history of the real church, not the fantastic church, that is, the history of the hierarchy under the power of the kings, is a series of vain endeavours on the part of this unfortunate hierarchy to preserve the truth of the teaching, by preaching it through the lie and departing from it in deeds. The meaning of the hierarchy is based only on the doctrine which it wishes to teach. The teaching speaks of meekness, self-renunciation, love, poverty; but the teaching is preached by means of violence and evil.

For the hierarchy to have something to teach and to have disciples, it must not renounce the teaching; but to clear itself and its illegitimate union with the power, it must by every cunning device conceal the essence of

the teaching, and so transfer the centre of gravity of the teaching from the essence of the teaching to its external side. That is precisely what is done by the hierarchy, the source of that deception of faith which is preached by the church. The source is the union of the hierarchy, under the name of the church, with the power, — with violence. The source of people's wishing to teach the faith to others is in this, that the true faith arraigns them, and they are obliged for the true faith to substitute their own invented faith, which can justify them.

The true faith may be anywhere, except where the faith is obviously false, that is, of the nature of violence, — it cannot be in the state religion. True faith may be in all so-called schisms, heresies, but certainly cannot be where it has united with the state. Strange to say, the appellations, "Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant faith," as established in common speech, mean nothing but "faith united with the temporal power," state religion, and so are false.

The concept of the church, that is, of the agreement of many, of the majority, and at the same time its nearness to the source of the teaching in the first two centuries of Christianity, was only one of the poor external proofs. Paul said, "I know from Christ Himself." Another said, "I know from Luke." And all said, "We think correctly, and the proof that we do is this, — there is a large assembly of us, *ecclesia*, the church." But it is only with the Council at Nicæa, which was established by the emperor, that for a part of those who professed the same teaching there began the direct and palpable deception.

"It seemed good to us and to the Holy Ghost," they began to say then. The concept of the church not only remained a poor argument, but even became a power for some people. It united with the temporal power and began to act as a power. And everything which united with the temporal power and fell under its sway stopped being faith and became a deception.

What does Christianity teach, regarding it as a teaching of any church or of all the churches?

Analyze by mixing or subdividing it, as you please, and the whole Christian teaching immediately divides up into two distinct parts, the doctrine of the dogmas, beginning with the divine Son, the Holy Ghost, the relation between these persons, and ending with the Eucharist with wine or without wine, leavened or unleavened bread, and the moral teaching: of meekness, abstinence from litigation, bodily and spiritual purity, non-condemnation, liberation from the fetters of slavery, and love of peace. No matter how much the teachers of the church tried to mix these two sides of the teaching, they never did mingle, and, like butter separating from water, always keep apart as large and small drops.

The difference between these two sides of the teaching is clear for anybody, and anybody may observe the fruits of either side of the teaching in the lives of the nations, and may from these fruits conclude which side is more important and, if it be allowable to speak of "more true," which is more true. Looking upon the history of Christianity from this side, one is horror-struck. Without exception, from the very beginning to the very end, up to our own time, no matter what dogma we may view, even beginning with the first, the dogma of Christ's divinity, down to the folding of the fingers, the communion with wine and without wine, the fruits of all these mental labours, used for the elucidation of the dogmas, are: malice, hatred, executions, expulsions, the murder of women and children, the stake, tortures. Looking upon the other side of the moral teaching, from the removal to the wilderness for the purpose of communing with God to the custom of distributing white loaves in the prisons, we find the fruits of this to be: all our concepts of goodness, all that joy and comfort, which serves us as a torch in history. —

It was possible for those people to err before whose eyes the fruits of either had not yet become evident, and it was even impossible not to err. It was even possible for those to err who were sincerely drawn into these disputes about the dogmas, without noticing that with these dogmas they were only serving the devil, and not God, without noticing that Christ had expressly said that he came to destroy all dogmas. It was also possible for those to err who, having inherited the traditions about the importance of these dogmas, received such a perverse mental education that they could not see their error; and it is possible for those ignorant people to err, to whom these dogmas mean nothing but words or fantastic representations. But for us, to whom the first meaning of the Gospel, which denies all dogmas, is revealed, for us who have before our eyes the fruits of these dogmas in history, for us it is impossible to err. History is for us a verification of the authenticity of the teaching, it is even a mechanical verification.

Is the dogma of the immaculate conception of the Virgin necessary, or not? What came from it? Malice, curses, scoffing. Has it been of any use? None. Is the doctrine about not punishing the harlot necessary, or not? What came from it? Thousands and thousands of times men have been softened by this reminder.

Again: do all men agree on any of the dogmas? No. Do all agree that to him who asks should be given? Yes.

Now, the first, the dogmas, on which all men do not agree, which are of no use to any one, which ruin men, are what the hierarchy has been giving out as faith; and the second, what all men agree upon, what all men need, and what saves men, this the hierarchy, without daring to deny it, has not dared to advance as the teaching, because this teaching denied the hierarchy itself.

1882.

TO N. N. GE'S (GAY'S) PAINTING

1886

TO N. N. GE'S (GAY'S) PAINTING

Christ's Last Discourse with His Disciples

At the top of the painting:

"A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

At the edges, extracts from the Gospel of John, Chap. XIII. 1–35.

Beneath:

Jesus said: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies."

At the last supper Jesus showed this in his acts.

After washing the feet of His twelve disciples, He said: "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

What was it that Jesus did, and what was the example which He gave to His disciples?

When after the supper Jesus began to wash the feet of His disciples, and Simon Peter wanted to oppose Him, He said to him: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Ye are clean, but not all."

Neither Simon Peter, nor the other disciples understood what Jesus was doing, when, kneeling before them, he washed their feet.

After having washed the feet of His betrayer, Jesus got up, put on His garment, and, sitting down again, said:

"Know ye what I have done to ye? Ye call me Master, and ye say well, for so I am."

But they knew not that Judas was the traitor, and did not understand what Jesus did or taught them.

Then, being troubled in spirit, Jesus said:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you will betray me."

And again they did not understand what He did, or what He said to them. They only looked one on another, doubting of whom He spake.

Meanwhile the favourite disciple of Jesus was leaning on His bosom. But Simon Peter, raising himself, motioned to the favourite disciple, that he should ask the Teacher of whom He spoke. And the favourite disciple, leaning on Jesus' breast, asked Him.

But Jesus did not give a direct answer. He knew that if He named His enemy, His disciples would be provoked and would wish to rebuke the traitor. But, wishing to save Judas, and not to ruin him, Jesus, instead of answering, stretched out His hand, took a piece of bread, and said softly: "He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it." And when He had given the sop to Judas, He said: "That thou doest, do quickly." The disciples, hearing this, thought that Jesus sent Judas to town to buy something that He had need of against the feast. But Judas understood that He was saving him from the wrath of His disciples, and immediately rose.

It is this that is represented in the painting.

The favourite disciple, John, alone knows who the traitor is. He leaped up from his seat and stared at Judas. He does not understand, does not believe, that a living man can hate Him who loves him. He is sorry for the unfortunate man, and is horrified at the same time.

Simon Peter guesses the truth from John's look, and looks around at John, and at Jesus, and at the traitor. And in his ardent heart flames up anger and the desire to defend his beloved Teacher.

Judas has arisen and taken up his garment, and is throwing it over himself and has made the first step. But his eyes cannot turn away from the saddened face of the Teacher. There is still time: he can turn back, fall down before His feet, repenting his sin. But the devil has already taken possession of his heart. "Do not submit," he says to him, "do not submit to your weakness; do not submit to the reproaches of the haughty disciples. They look at you and only wait for the chance to humble you. Go."

Jesus is lying, leaning on His arm; He does not look at Judas, but He sees and knows what is going on in Judas' heart, and waits, and suffers for him. Jesus has with His hands fed His disciples, has with His hands washed the feet of His enemy, has saved him from human punishment, and until the end calls him with love to repentance, and forgives him. And yet Judas does not return to Him. And Jesus grieves on account of all those who do not come to Him.

Judas has gone, and has disappeared in the darkness of the night. The door has barely closed, when the disciples learn who the traitor is. They are agitated and provoked. Peter wants to run after him. But Jesus raises His head, and says: "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. . . . A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

It was only then that they understood that, by loving those who were in the world, He proved in fact that He would love them until the end.

1886.

APROPOS OF A. I. ERSHÓV'S BOOK, "RECOLLECTIONS FROM SEVASTOPOL"

1889

APROPOS OF A. I. ERSHÓV'S BOOK, "RECOLLECTIONS FROM SEVASTOPOL"

A. I. Ershóv sent me his book, *Recollections from Sevastopol*, asking me to read it and tell him the impression produced on me by this reading.

I read the book, and I feel very much like telling about the impression which the reading produced on me, because this impression is very powerful. The author and I went through all that thirty-four years ago. What we went through was what the author describes, — the horror of the war, — and what he almost does not describe, — the spiritual condition experienced then by the author.

A boy who is just let out from a military school finds his way to Sevastopol. A few months before, this boy was joyous and happy, as girls are happy the next day after their marriage. Only yesterday, it seems, he put on his officer's uniform, which the experienced tailor properly padded with cotton under the facings, spreading the heavy cloth and the shoulder-straps, so as to conceal the youthful and unformed childish breast and give it the aspect of manliness; only yesterday he put on this uniform and went to the hair-dresser's, where he had his hair fixed and treated with pomatum and accentuated his nascent moustache with wax, and, clattering over the

steps with his sword hanging down from a gilt hanger, and with his cap poised jauntily, he walked down the street. He no longer looks about him carefully, for fear of neglecting to salute an officer, and the lower ranks see him from afar, and he nonchalantly touches the vizor of his cap or commands, "Excused!" It was only yesterday that the general, his commander, spoke to him seriously as to an equal, and he saw before him a brilliant military career. It was only yesterday, it seems, that his nurse admired him, and his mother was touched and wept for joy, kissing and fondling him, and he felt both happy and ashamed. It was only yesterday that he met a charming girl; they talked of all kinds of nonsense, and the lips of both of them wrinkled with repressed smiles; and he knew that she, and not only she, but girls a hundred and a thousand times more beautiful than she, might, and certainly must, fall in love with him. All that, it seems, happened yesterday. All that may have been petty, and ridiculous, and vainglorious, but all that was innocent and, therefore, sweet.

And here he is in Sevastopol. Suddenly he sees that something is not quite right, that something he did not expect is taking place. His commander tells him, that same man whom his mother loves so much, from whom not she alone, but everybody else as well, expected so much good, him, with his bodily and spiritual, unique, incomparable beauty, to go where they kill and maim people. The commander does not deny the fact that he is the same youth, whom all love and whom nobody can help but love, and whose life is more important to him than anything else in the world, — he does not deny this, but he calmly says, "Go, and let them kill you." His heart is compressed by double fear, the fear of death and the fear of shame, and, looking as though it did not make any difference to him whether he went to death or stayed where he is, he gets ready, pretending that he is inter-

ested in what he is going for, and also in his things and bed. He goes to the place where they kill; he goes, hoping that it is only talk about people being killed there, but that in reality there is nothing of the kind, but something else. He needs only, however, to stay half an hour on the bastions, in order to see that in reality it is more terrible, more intolerable, than he expected. In his very sight a man was agleam with joy and abloom with alacrity. And here something pings, and this man falls into the excrements of other men, — one terrible suffering, regret, and arraignment of everything taking place here. This is terrible, but he must not look, he must not think. He cannot help thinking: "That was he, but it will soon be I. How so? For what? Why I, that same I who am so good, so sweet, so dear, not only to my nurse, not only to my mother, not only to 'her,' but to so many people? How they loved me on my way down, at the station, how they were happy with me, and made me a present of a tobacco-pouch! And here they are not interested in my pouch, not even how and when they will maim this my body, these legs, these arms, and will kill me as they have killed him. Nobody is interested to know whether I shall to-day be one of those; on the contrary, it seems desirable to them that I should be. Yes, I am of no use to any one here. And if I am not, why am I here?" he puts the question to himself, but is unable to find an answer.

It would be well if some one would explain to him what all this is for, or, if not explain, would tell him something encouraging. But no one ever says anything of the kind. Indeed, it seems, it is impossible to say this. It would make him feel ashamed, if some one should say that to him. And so no one says anything. "Why, then, why am I here?" the boy calls out to himself, and he feels like crying. And there is no answer, except a morbid fainting of the heart. But the sergeant

enters, and he dissembles — Time goes on. Others are looking, or he thinks that they are looking at him, and he makes every effort in order not to disgrace himself. Not to disgrace himself, he has to act like the others: stop thinking, smoke, drink, jest, and conceal. And a day, another, a third, a week pass — The boy gets used to concealing his fear and drowning thought. What is most terrible to him is this, that he is the only one who is in such ignorance as to why he is here in this terrible condition: others, it seems to him, know something, and he wants to provoke the others to a frank conversation. He thinks that it would be easier to confess, if he knew that others are in the same terrible condition. But it seems impossible to provoke the others to a sincere conversation: the others apparently are as much afraid to speak of it as he is. It is impossible to speak of it. What they may speak of is scarps and counterscarps, porter, ranks, rations, cards, — that is all right. And thus passes day after day; the youth gets used to not thinking, not asking, and not speaking about what he is doing, and he none the less feels all the time that he is doing what is contrary to his whole being. Thus pass seven months, and the youth is not killed and not maimed, and the war comes to an end.

The terrible moral torture has come to an end. No one has found out how afraid he was, how he wanted to get away, and how he did not understand why he remained there. At last he can breathe freely, come to his senses, and reflect on what has happened.

"Now what has happened? For the period of seven months I was in fear and agony, concealing my suffering from everybody else. There was no exploit, that is, an act of which I may be proud; there was not even such as it would be a pleasure to recall. All the exploits reduce themselves to this, that I was food for cannon, for a long time stayed in a place where they killed a lot of

men, by wounding them in their heads, their breasts, and all the parts of their bodies. But that is not my personal affair. It may have been prominent, but I was partaker in the common cause. The common cause? What does it consist in? They have killed dozens, thousands of men — well, what of it? Sevastopol, that Sevastopol which was defended, has been surrendered, and the fleet has been sunk, and the keys of the temple at Jerusalem have remained where they were before, and Russia has been diminished. What of it? Is it possible there is but one conclusion, that in my stupidity and youth I got into a terrible condition, in which I passed seven months, and that on account of my youth I was unable to get away from it? Is that all?"

The youth is in a very advantageous position for making this inevitable logical conclusion: in the first place the war ended disgracefully and cannot be justified in any way (there is no liberation of Europe or of the Bulgarians, and so forth); in the second place, the youth has not paid such a tribute to war as that of being maimed for life, which would make it hard to recognize as a mistake what was its cause. The youth has received no special honours, the renunciation of which would be connected with the renunciation of war; the youth could tell the truth, which is this, that he accidentally got into a hopeless situation and, not knowing how to get out of it, continued to stay in it until it solved itself. The youth feels like saying this, and he would certainly say it frankly; but suddenly the youth is surprised to hear people all about him speak of the past war, not as something disgraceful, as which it appears to him, but as something good and even unusual; he hears that the defence in which he took part was a great historic event, that it was an unheard-of defence, that those who were in Sevastopol, and he, too, were heroes above all heroes, and that his not having run away, like the staying of the artillery horse, which could

not break the halter and so did not get away, was a great exploit, — that he is a hero. And so the boy listens, at first in surprise, and later with curiosity, and loses the strength to tell the whole truth, — he cannot speak against his companions and give them away; but he still wants to say part of the truth, and he composes a description of what he experienced, and in this description tries to say everything which he experienced. He describes his position in the war: people are being killed about him; he kills people; he feels terror, disgust, and pity. But the very first question which occurs to any one — why he does it, why he does not stop and go away — the author does not answer. He does not say, as they spoke anciently, when they hated their enemies, as the Jews hated the Philistines, that he hated the allies; on the contrary, he here and there shows his sympathy for them as for his brothers. Nor does he speak of his ardent desire to have the keys of the temple at Jerusalem vested in our hands, or even that the fleet should exist or not. You felt, as you read the book, that the questions of men's life and death are not commensurable with the political questions. And the reader feels that to the question why the author did what he did there is but one answer: "Because I was taken up in my childhood, or immediately before the war, or because I accidentally fell into a condition from which I could not get out without great efforts. I fell into this condition, and when I was made to perform the most unnatural deeds in the world, — killing my brothers, who had not offended me in any way, — I preferred doing that to being subject to punishment and disgrace." And though in the book short hints are thrown out as to the love of Tsar and country, one feels that those are only a tribute to the conditions under which the author lives. Though it is assumed that, since it is good to sacrifice one's soundness and life, all the sufferings and death, which are encountered, are reasons for praising those who undergo

them, one feels that the author knows that that is not true, because he does not voluntarily subject his life to danger. One feels that the author knows that there is a law of God — "love thy neighbour, and so thou shalt not kill" — which cannot be abolished by any human sophistry. In this does the worth of the book consist; but it is a pity that this is only felt and not expressed frankly and clearly. The sufferings and death of men are described, but nothing is said as to what produces them. Thirty-five years ago that was all right, but now something else is wanted. It is necessary to describe what produces the sufferings and death at wars, in order that these causes may be found out, understood, and destroyed.

"War! How terrible war is, with its wounds, blood, and deaths," say people. "We must establish the Red Cross, in order to alleviate the wounds, the sufferings, and death." But it is not the wounds, the sufferings, death, that are terrible in war. All men, who eternally suffer and who die, ought to become accustomed to sufferings and to death, and not to be terrified by them. Even without war people die from hunger, from inundations, from infectious diseases. What is terrible is not suffering and death, but that people are permitted to produce them.

The one sentence of a man, who for the sake of curiosity asks that a certain man be hanged, and that of another, who answers, "All right, hang him, if you please," — this one sentence is full of men's death and suffering. Such a sentence, printed and read, carries death and suffering to millions. It is not suffering and crippling and bodily death, but spiritual crippling and death that should be diminished. We do not need the *Red* Cross, but the simple cross of Christ, in order that the lie and deception be destroyed —

I was just finishing this preface, when a young man from the School of Yunkers came to see me. He told me that he was troubled by religious doubts. He had read

Dostoévski's *The Great Inquisitor*, and he was troubled by doubts as to why Christ taught a doctrine which was so hard to execute. He had read none of my writings. I cautiously told him that he ought to read the Gospel and there look for answers to the questions of life. He listened and agreed with me. Before the end of our conversation I spoke to him about wine, advising him not to drink. He said: "But in military service this is sometimes necessary." I thought, he would say, "For the sake of health, or strength," and was getting ready to vanquish him with proofs from experience and science, but he said: "For example, at Geok-Tepe, when Skóbelev wanted to kill the population, the soldiers refused, and he filled them with liquor, and then —" That is where all the horrors of war are: in this boy with his fresh, youthful face, with his shoulder-straps, through which are carefully drawn the ends of the hood, with clean, blackened boots, and with his naïve eyes, and so forlorn a world-conception!

That is where the horror of war is!

What millions of workers of the Red Cross will cure the wounds which swarm in these words, — the product of a whole education?

May 10, 1889.

"THE NON-ACTING"

1893

"THE NON-ACTING"[1]

(*a*) THE editor of a Parisian periodical, the *Revue des Revues*, assuming, as he writes in his letter, that the opinion of two famous writers concerning the present attitude of the minds might be interesting to me, sent me two clippings from French newspapers. One of these contains Zola's speech, the other Dumas's letter to the editor of the *Gaulois*. I am very thankful to Mr. Smith for his message.

Both these documents, on account of the reputation of their authors, and their timeliness, and chiefly on account of their oppositeness, are of a profound interest, and I want to express the few thoughts which they evoked in me.

It is difficult in the current literature to find, in a more succinct, powerful, and striking form, the expression of those two very fundamental forces, from which the resultant for the motion of humanity is composed; one, — the dead force of inertia, which strives to retain humanity on the road which it has already traversed, the

[1] This article was in 1896 rewritten by Tolstóy in French, and was published by his French translator, Halpérine-Kaminsky, and also in the *Cosmopolis*. The important changes are given here in the notes marked *F.*

The order of the passages in the French version is as follows: a, k, l, m, c, e, d, g, h, q, o, s, p, r, v; aa, cc, ee, dd, gg, ii, jj, ll, kk, mm, qq, ss, uu, rr, oo, ww, xx, zz. The other passages are omitted in the French.

other, the living force of reason, which draws it toward the light.

Zola does not approve of this, that the new teachers of youth propose to them to believe in something indefinite and vague, and he is quite right, but, unfortunately, he, on his side, proposes to them another belief, a belief in something far more vague and indefinite, in science and labour.

(*b*) Zola considers the question as to what the science is in which we must never stop believing to be quite solved and subject to no doubt.

(*c*) To work in the name of science! But the trouble is, that the word "science" has a very broad and little defined meaning, so that what some people regard as science, that is, a very important business, is considered by others, by far the greater number of men, by all the working people, as unnecessary foolishness. It cannot be said that this is due to the ignorance of the working people, who are unable to understand all the profundity of science, — the learned themselves constantly deny one another. One set of scholars consider philosophy, theology, jurisprudence, political economy, the science of sciences, while other scholars, the natural scientists, consider all that a most trifling, unscientific business; and, on the other hand, what the positivists consider to be the most important sciences are regarded by the spiritualists, the philosophers, and the theologians as useless, if not harmful, occupations. More than that: in one and the same branch every system has among its very priests its ardent defenders and adversaries, who are equally competent and who express diametrically opposite opinions.[1]

We all know that what was considered to be exclu-

[1] After this the French version has: "Finally, do we not see every year new scientific discoveries which, after having been admired by all the boobies of the world and having brought fortunes to their inventors, are subsequently recognized as ridiculous errors by those very men who have extolled them?"

sively science and a very important matter by the Romans, what they prided themselves on, without which they considered a man to be a barbarian, was rhetoric, that is, an exercise which we now make fun of and consider not only no art, but simply foolishness. We know also that what was considered to be art and the most important business in the Middle Ages, scholasticism, we make fun of now. And I think it does not take any special daring of thought in order from the vast amount of knowledge, which in our world is regarded as an important business and is called science, to foresee at which of these our descendants, reading the description of the seriousness with which we busied ourselves with our rhetorics and scholastics, that in our time were regarded as science, will also shrug their shoulders.

(*d*) In our time people, having freed themselves from one kind of superstitions without being cognizant of it, have fallen into other superstitions, not less groundless and harmful than those from which they have just freed themselves. Having freed themselves from the superstitions of the obsolete religions, people have fallen into the scientific superstitions. At first it seems that there can be nothing in common between the beliefs of the Egyptians as to there being a bird Phœnix and the beliefs of our time as to the world having resulted from the revolution of matter and the struggle for existence, as to criminality arising from heredity, as to the existence of micro-organisms in the shape of commas, which cause all the diseases, and so forth. There would seem to be nothing in common between these beliefs, but that only seems so.

We need only in imagination transfer ourselves to the mental condition of the ancient Egyptian, when his beliefs were offered to him by his priests, to convince ourselves that the bases on which he accepted his beliefs and that on which at present all kinds of scientific propositions are

accepted by the men of our time are not only similar, but also absolutely identical.

As the Egyptian really did not believe in the Phœnix, but in this, that there are men who incontestably know the highest truth accessible to men, and that, therefore, it is good to believe in them, so also the men of our time believe, not in the Darwinian theory of heredity and in the commas, but in what is given out to them as the truth by the priests of science, the foundations of whose activity remain as mysterious to the believers as were for the Egyptians the activities of their priests.

I venture to say also that I have more than once observed that, as the ancient priests lied and gave out as the truth whatever occurred to them, without its being verified by any one but their own priests, so also do the so-called men of science, frequently.[1]

[1] Instead of the whole of passage (*d*), which is obviously the result of the censor's action, the French version gives the following: "The opinion is generally admitted that religion and science are opposed to one another. So they are, but only in relation to time, that is, what by the contemporaries is regarded as science frequently becomes religion for the descendants. What is ordinarily designated by the name of religion is most generally the science of the past, while what is called science is to a great extent the religion of the present.

"We say that the affirmation of the Jews that the world was created in six days, that the children will be punished for the sins of their fathers, that certain maladies may be cured by looking at a serpent, are all data of religion; while we regard as data of science the affirmations of our contemporaries that the world created itself by turning about a centre which is everywhere, that all the species are the result of the struggle for existence, that criminals are the products of heredity, that there are certain organisms in the form of commas, which produce certain diseases. It is easy to see, if in imagination we transfer ourselves to the mental state of an ancient Jew, that for him the creation of the world in six days, the serpent curing diseases, etc., were data of science in its highest degree of development, just as for a man of our time are Darwin's law, Koch's commas, heredity, etc.

"And just as a Jew did not exactly believe in the creation of the world in six days, in the serpent curing certain diseases, etc., but in the infallibility of his priests and, therefore, in all their assertions, so also the great majority of the civilized people of our time do not

(*e*) Zola's whole discourse is directed against the teachers of youth, who invite them to return to the obsolete beliefs, and Zola considers himself to be their adversary. In reality, those against whom he arms himself and those whom he champions, that is, the representatives of science, are men of the same camp.

(*f*) If they properly analyzed each other's tendencies, they would find no cause for quarrels, "*querelles d'amoureux*," as Dumas says. Both seek their bases of life, its prime movers, not in themselves, not in their reason, but in the external human forms of life: some, in what they call religion; others, in what they call science. Some, those who look for salvation in religion, take it from the tradition of the ancient knowledge of other men, and want to believe in this alien and ancient knowledge; others, those who look for salvation in what they call science, do not take it from their knowledge, but from the knowledge of other men, and believe in this other knowledge. The first see the salvation of humanity in a corrected, mended, or purified Catholicism; the others see it in the aggregate of that most accidental, varied, and unnecessary knowledge which they call science and consider to be something self-acting and beneficent and, therefore, inevitably certain to correct all the defects of life and give to humanity the highest accessible good. The first seem to be intent on not seeing that what they wish to reëstablish is only an empty chrysalis, from which the butterfly has long ago flown away, to lay eggs in another place, and that this reconstruction will not only fail to remove the ca-

believe in the formation of the worlds through rotation, or in heredity, or in the commas, but in the infallibility of their lay priests who are called savants and who affirm, with the same aplomb as the Jewish priests, everything which they pretend to know.

"I will even say that if the ancient priests, who were controlled only by their colleagues, permitted themselves now and then to depart from veracity for no other reason than in order to mystify their public, the priests of modern science do the same with just as much boldness."

lamities of our time, but will even increase them, by turning people's eyes away from the real work. The second do not want to see that what they call science, being a fortuitous collection of some kind of knowledge, which at the present time has interested a few idle men, can either be an innocent pastime for rich people, or, at best, an instrument of evil or good, according to this, in whose hands it shall be, but is unable in itself to mend anything. In reality, in the depth of their hearts, neither of them believes in the reality of the means which they propose, and both alike only try to turn their own eyes and those of other men away from the abyss, before which humanity is standing already and into which, continuing to walk on the same road, it must inevitably fall. The first see this distractive means in mysticism; the others, whose representative Zola is, in the stultifying action of work for the sake of science.

The difference between the two is this, that the first believe in the ancient wisdom, the lie of which has been pointed out, and the second believe in the new wisdom, the lie of which has not yet been made manifest, and which, therefore, inspires a few naïve people with a certain tremor of awe. (*g*) However, the superstition in the latter case is hardly less than in the first. The only difference is this, that one is the superstition of the past, the other the superstition of the present.[1]

(*h*) And so, to follow the advice of Zola, by devoting one's life to the service of what in our time and world is considered science, is not that dangerous? (*i*) What if

[1] After this, the French rendering reads: "And the proportion of error and truth is, I suppose, very nearly the same in both. Consequently, to work in the name of any belief whatsoever, be it religion or science, is not only a doubtful means for ameliorating the existence of man, but also a dangerous means which may produce more evil than good.

"To consecrate one's life to the fulfilment of duties imposed by religion, — prayers, communion, alms;"

I shall devote all my life to the investigation of phenomena, like those of heredity according to Lombroso's teaching, and of Koch's liquid, and of the formation of humus by means of actions of the worms, and of Crookes's fourth condition of matter, and so forth, (*j*) and suddenly I learn before death that what I devoted my whole life to were foolish and even harmful trifles, while life was only one?

(*k*) There is a little known Chinese philosopher, Lao-tse (the best translation of his book, *Of the Road of Virtue*, is that by Stanislas Julien). The essence of Lao-tse's teaching is this, that the highest good of individual men, and especially of the aggregate of men, of nations, can be acquired through the knowledge of "Tao," — a word which is translated by "path, virtue, truth;" but the knowledge of "Tao" can be acquired only through non-acting, "*le non-agir*," as Julien translates it. All the misfortunes of men, according to Lao-tse's teaching, are due, not so much to their not having done what is necessary as to their doing what they ought not to do. And so men would be freed from all personal and especially from all social misfortunes, — it is the latter that the Chinese sage has more especially in mind, — if they practised non-acting (*s'ils pratiquaient le non-agir*).

(*l*) I believe that he is quite right. Let each man work zealously. But at what? The gambler on Exchange, the banker, returns home from the Exchange, where he has worked zealously; the manufacturer returns from his establishment, where thousands of men ruin their lives in manufacturing mirrors, tobacco, whiskey. All these men work, but can we encourage them in their work? But perhaps we ought to speak only of men working for science.[1]

[1] Instead of (*l*) the French version runs: "Lao-tse's idea seems queer, but it is impossible not to be of his opinion, if we consider the

(*m*) I constantly receive from all kinds of authors all kinds of pamphlets, and frequently books, with artistic and scientific studies.

One has definitely settled the question of Christian gnoseology, another has printed a book on the cosmic ether, a third has settled the social question, a fourth — the political question, a fifth — the Eastern question, a sixth edits a periodical devoted to the investigations of the mysterious forces of the spirit and of Nature, a seventh has solved the problem of the knight.

All these men work for science assiduously and zealously, but I think that the time and labour, not only of all these writers, but even of many others, have not only been wasted, but have also been harmful. They have been harmful, in the first place, because in the preparation of these writings thousands of men have manufactured the paper and the types, have set type and printed, and, above all, have fed and clothed all these workers of science, (*n*) and also, because all these authors, instead of feeling their guilt toward society, as they would if they played cards or blind man's buff, continue with a calm conscience to do their useless work.

(*o*) Who does not know those cruel men, hopeless as regards the truth, who are so busy that they never have any time, especially no time to find out whether anybody

results of the occupations of the great majority of the men of our century.

"Let all men work assiduously, and their work will make their lives good and happy, and will deliver them from the torment of infinity, we are told by Zola. Work! But at what? The manufacturers and sellers of opium, of tobacco, of whiskey, the gamblers on the 'Change, the inventors and manufacturers of engines of destruction, all the military, all the jailers, all the hangmen, work, but it is evident that humanity would only be the gainer, if all these workers stopped working.

"But maybe Zola's recommendation has reference only to men whose work is inspired by science? In fact, the greater part of Zola's discourse is devoted to the rehabilitation of science, which he supposes to be attacked."

wants the work over which they are working with such zeal, or whether it is not harmful? You say to them, "Your work is useless or harmful for such and such a reason, — wait, we shall discuss the matter;" but they do not listen to you, and answer with irony, "You have time to discuss the matter, since you have nothing to do, (*p*) but I am working on an investigation of how many times such and such a word is used by such and such an ancient author, or on the definition of the forms of the atoms, or on telepathy," and so forth.

(*q*) Besides, I have always marvelled at that strange opinion, which has taken root more especially in Western Europe, that work is something like a virtue, and long before reading this idea, as clearly expressed in Zola's discourse, I frequently marvelled at the strange significance ascribed to work.

It is only the ant in the fable, a being deprived of reason and of strivings after the good, that could have thought that work was a virtue, and that could pride itself on it.

Zola says that work makes man good; but I have observed the opposite: conscious work, the antlike pride in one's work, makes cruel, not only the ant, but also man.

(*r*) The greatest malefactors of humanity [1] have always been very busy, never for a moment remaining without an occupation or amusement.

But even if industry is not an obvious vice, it can in no way be considered a virtue. Work can no more be a virtue than eating. Work is a necessity, the deprivation of which produces suffering, but it is by no means a virtue. The exaltation of work is as monstrous as would be the exaltation of eating to the rank of a virtue. The significance ascribed to work in our society could have arisen only as a reaction against idleness, raised to the attribute

[1] Such as Nero and Peter I. — *F.*

of nobility and even now considered as a distinction among the rich and uneducated classes. Work, the exercise of one's organs, is always a necessity for man, as is proved both by the calves who gambol about the pole to which they are tied, and by the men of the wealthy classes,[1] the martyrs of gymnastics and of all kinds of games, — cards, chess, lawn-tennis, and so forth, — who are not able to find any more sensible exercise for their organs.

Work is not only no virtue, but in our falsely organized society it is for the most part a means of moral anæsthetics, something like smoking or drinking, for the purpose of concealing from oneself the irregularities and viciousness of our life.

(*s*) "I have no time to talk with you about philosophy, morality, religion; I have to edit a daily with half a million subscribers;[2] I have to build the Eiffel Tower, to organize the Chicago Exposition, to cut the Panama Canal,[3] (*t*) to write the twenty-eighth volume of my works, to paint a picture, to write an opera."

(*u*) If the men of our time did not have the excuse of their all-absorbing work, they would be unable to live as they now live. Only thanks to the fact that with their trifling and for the most part harmful work they conceal from themselves those contradictions in which they live, — thanks only to that, are they able to live as they do.

It is as such a means that Zola represents work to his hearers. He says directly: "This is only an empirical means for passing an honourable and almost peaceful life. But is that little, is it little to acquire good physical and moral health and to avoid the danger of a dream, by

[1] Who can find no more useful employment for their mental faculties than the reading of periodicals and novels. — *F.*

[2] I have to organize an army. — *F.*

[3] To investigate heredity. — *F.*

solving by work the question of the greatest happiness accessible to man?"

(*v*) Such is the advice given by Zola to the youth of our time!

(*aa*) Something quite different is said by Dumas. The chief difference between Dumas's letter and Zola's discourse, to say nothing of the external difference, which is this, that Zola's discourse is directed to the youth and seems to curry favour with them (*bb*) (which has become a universal and disagreeable phenomenon of our time, as also the currying of favour with women by the authors), (*cc*) while Dumas's letter is not directed to the youth and does not make them compliments, but on the contrary points out to them their constant error of self-confidence, and so, instead of impressing upon the youth that they are very important personages and that the whole strength is in them, which they must by no means think, if they want to do something sensible, instructs not only them, but also adults and old people in very many things,— the chief difference is this, that Zola's discourse puts people to sleep, retaining them on the path on which they are travelling, assuring them that what they know is precisely what they ought to know; while Dumas's letter wakes people, pointing out to them that their life is not at all what it ought to be, and that they do not know the chief thing which they ought to know.

(*dd*) Dumas, too, believes as little in the superstition of the past as in the superstition of the present. But for the very reason that he does not believe in the superstition of the past, nor in the superstition of the present, he thinks for himself, and so sees clearly, not only the present, but also the future, as those saw it who in antiquity were called "seeing" prophets. Strange though it must seem to those who, reading the works of authors, see only the external side of their authorship, and not the author's

soul, the same Dumas who wrote *Dame aux Camélias*, *Affaire Clémenceau*, and so forth, now sees the future and prophesies about it. No matter how strange this may seem to us, who are accustomed to imagine a prophet in skins of animals and in the wilderness, prophecy remains prophecy, even though it is not uttered on the banks of the Jordan, but is printed on the banks of the Seine in the printing-office of the *Gaulois*, and Dumas's words are indeed a prophecy and bear in themselves the chief symptoms of a prophecy: in the first place, these words are the very opposite of the universal disposition of the men among whom they are uttered; in the second, the men who hear these words, in spite of themselves and not themselves knowing why, agree with them; and, in the third, which is most important, the prophecy contributes to the realization of what it predicts.

(*ee*) The more people will believe in this, that they may be led by something external, which acts of itself, in spite of their will, to a change and amelioration of their lives, the more difficult will this change and amelioration be. In this does the chief defect of Zola's discourse lie. But, on the contrary, the more they will believe in what Dumas predicts, namely, that inevitably and soon there will come the time when all men shall love one another and, abandoning themselves to this love, shall change all their present life, the quicker this time will arrive. In this does the chief merit of Dumas's letter consist. (*ff*) Zola advises men not to change their lives, but only to intensify their activity in the direction once started upon, and thus keeps them from changing their lives, while Dumas, by predicting an internal change of human sentiments, inspires them to change them.

(*gg*) Dumas predicts that men, having tried everything, will finally, in a very short time, go seriously about the application to life of the law of the "love of one another," and will, as he says, be seized "by a madness, an in-

sanity" of love. (*hh*) He says that amidst the phenomena which appear so threatening he sees already the signs of that new nascent disposition of love among men; that the armed nations no longer hate one another, that in the struggle of the wealthy classes with the poor there is no longer manifested the triumph of the victors, but the sincere compassion of the victors for the conquered and dissatisfaction and shame on account of the victory; he sees, above all, he says, centres of love attraction form, growing like a snowball, and inevitably sure to attract everything living, which so far has not yet united with them, and he sees that by thus changing the disposition love will destroy all the evil from which people suffer.

(*ii*) I think that, even if we may disagree as to the nearness of the change which Dumas predicts, or even the possibility itself of such a love infatuation of men for one another, no one will dispute the fact that, if this happened, humanity would be freed from the great majority of misfortunes which beset and menace it now.[1] (*jj*) It cannot be denied that, if men did what thousands of years ago was prescribed not only by Christ, but also by all the sages of the world, that is, if, though unable to love one another as themselves, men did not do to one another what they do not want that others should do to them, if men abandoned themselves to altruism instead of egoism, if the structure of life from being individualistic were changed to a collectivistic one, as the men of science express the same idea in their bad jargon, the lives of men,

[1] The French version of (*jj*) differs in wording but not in essence from the Russian. It is preceded by the following passage: "The only objection, or rather the only question which can be put to Dumas, is this: If the love of our neighbour is possible, inherent in human nature, why have so many thousand years passed (for the commandment of loving God and our neighbour is not Christ's, but even that of Moses) without its being practised by men, who know this means of happiness? What cause impedes the manifestation of this natural sentiment, which is so beneficent to humanity?"

instead of being miserable, would become happy. More than that: everybody recognizes the fact that life, continued on those pagan foundations of the struggle on which it is proceeding now, will inevitably bring humanity to the greatest misfortunes, and that this time is near at hand. Everybody sees that the more fully and the more energetically they shall take the land and the products of labour away from one another, the more envenomed they will become and the more inevitably will the people from whom everything has been taken away seize from the robbers what for so long a time they have been deprived of, and cruelly repay them for all their privations.[1] (*kk*) Besides, all the men of our world recognize the obligatoriness for themselves of the religious Christian law of love, or the worldly law, based on the same Christian law, of respect for another's life and for man's personality and rights.

(*ll*) Men know all this, and, in spite of it, arrange their lives contrary to their advantage and security, and to the law which they profess.

(*mm*) Apparently there is some hidden, but important cause, which keeps people from fulfilling what is advantageous for them, what would free them from an obvious danger, and what they recognize as religious and moral law, which is binding on them. It is certainly not for the purpose of deceiving one another that the love of one another has been extolled among them for so many centuries and is now preached from thousands of different religious and lay pulpits. It has long been time to decide

[1] Nor does any one doubt that the respective armaments of the nations will end in terrible massacres, in the ruin and the degeneration of all the nations chained in this circle of armaments. Nobody doubts that the present order of things, if it is prolonged for a few decades longer, will lead to a certain and general catastrophe. We need only open our eyes, to see the abyss toward which we are walking. But we can say that Jesus' prophecy has been fulfilled in the men of our time: They have ears, in order not to hear, and eyes, in order not to see, and reason, in order not to understand. — *F.*

that the love of one's neighbour is an advantageous, useful, and good thing, and on its basis to build up life, or, recognizing that love is an unrealizable dream, to stop talking of it. But people still fail to do either; they continue to live contrary to love and to extol it. They evidently believe that love is possible, desirable, and proper for them, but are unable to realize it. What is the cause of it?[1]

All the great changes in the life of one man or in the life of the whole of humanity begin and are achieved in thought only. No matter what external changes may take place in the lives of men, no matter how men may preach the necessity of changing their sentiments and acts, the lives of men will not change, unless a change takes place in their thoughts. But let a change take place in thought, and sooner or later, according to the importance of the change, it will take place in the feelings and actions and lives of men, and just as inevitably as the ship changes its direction after the turn of the rudder.

Beginning with the first words of His preaching, Christ did not say to men: "Do this way or that way, have such or such feelings," but He said to men: "Μετανοεῖτε, bethink yourselves, change the comprehension of life." He did not say to men, "Love one another" (this He said later to His disciples, men who understood His teachings), but He said to all men what had been said before by His predecessor, John the Baptist, "Repent, that is, bethink yourselves, change your comprehension of life, μετανοεῖτε,

[1] After this follows in the French version: "What is the cause of the contradiction which has lasted for centuries? It is not that the men of our time have not the desire or the possibility of doing what is dictated to them by their good sense and the danger of their condition, and especially by the law of Him whom they call God and by their conscience, but because they do precisely what Zola advises them to do: they are busy, they all work at something begun long ago, and are unable to stop for the purpose of concentrating themselves and reflecting on what they should be."

bethink yourselves, else you will all perish." "The meaning of your life cannot consist in this: that each of you should seek the separate good of his personality, or the good of a certain aggregate of men," He said, "because this good, acquired at the expense of other personalities, families, nations, who are seeking the same with the same means, is obviously not only unattainable, but must inevitably bring you to perdition. Understand that the meaning of your life can be only in the fulfilment of the will of Him who sent you into it and demands of you, not the pursuit of your personal aims, but of His end, which consists in the establishment of union and love among all beings, in the establishment of the kingdom of God,[1]

[1] "Μετανοεῖτε, change in such a way that you may understand life, or you will all perish," He said eighteen hundred years ago; and at present all the contradictions and all the evils of our time are due to this, that men have not listened to Him and have not accepted the conception of life which He proposed to them. Μετανοεῖτε, He said, "or you will all perish." The alternative is the same. The only difference is that it is more pressing in our time. If it was possible two thousand years ago, at the time of the Roman Empire, or even at the time of Charles V., or even before the Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, not to see the vanity, I shall even say the absurdity of the attempts at attaining personal happiness, the happiness of the family, the nation, or the state, by means of struggling against those who try to attain the same personal happiness, or that of the family or the state, this illusion has become absolutely impossible in our time for any man who will stop, if only for a moment, in his work and will reflect on what he is, what the world around him is, and what he ought to be. Indeed, if I were called upon to give just one piece of advice, such as I should regard as most useful to men, I would say only this to them: "For God's sake, stop for a moment, cease working, look about you, think of what you are, what you ought to be, — think of the ideal."

Zola says that the nations ought not to look up to or to believe in a superior force, nor to rave about an ideal. Probably Zola understands by the word "ideal" either the supernatural, that is, the theological balderdash about the Trinity, the church, the Pope, etc., or the inexplicable, as he says, the forces of the vast universe in which we welter. And in this case people will do well to follow Zola's advice. But the ideal is neither the supernatural nor the inexplicable. The ideal is, on the contrary, the most natural thing possible, and, I shall not say the most explicable, but the most certain thing for man.

(*nn*) when the swords shall be forged into ploughshares and the spears into pruning-hooks, and the lion shall lie with the lamb, as the prophets expressed it. Change your comprehension of life, or else you will perish," said He. But men have paid no attention to Christ and have not changed their comprehension of life, and have retained it until the present. And it is this false conception of life, which men have retained, in spite of the complexity of the forms of life and the development of the consciousness of the men of our time, that is the cause why men, comprehending the whole beneficence of love, the whole perilousness of life, which is opposed to it, recognizing it as the law of their God or the law of life, are none the less unable to follow it.

Indeed, what chance has a man of our life, who assumes the aim of his life to lie in his personal or domestic or national good, which is attained only by a tense struggle with other men striving for the same, to love those who are always in his way, and whom he must inevitably ruin in order that he may attain his own ends?

The ideal, in geometry, is the absolutely straight line and the circle all radii of which are equal; in science, it is pure truth; in morality — perfect virtue. Though all these things, the straight line, and pure truth and perfect virtue, have never existed, they are none the less natural, better known, and more explicable to us than all our other knowledge; but they are the things which we know truly and with absolute certainty.

It is generally said that reality is what exists, or rather, that only that which exists is real. The very opposite is true: true reality, the one we know truly, is what has never existed. The ideal is the only thing which we know with certainty: and that has never existed. It is only thanks to the ideal that we know anything whatever, and so it is only the ideal that can guide us as individuals and as humanity in our existence. The Christian ideal has been before us for eighteen centuries; it burns in our time with such intensity that we have to make great efforts in order not to see that all our evils are due to our not taking it as our guide. And the more difficult it is getting not to see this, the more do certain men increase their efforts to persuade us to do as they do, to shut our eyes, in order that we may not see it. To be sure of getting to our destination, we must throw the compass overboard, they say, and never stop. — *F.*

(*oo*) For a change of feelings and acts to take place, there must first of all take place a change of thoughts. For a change of thoughts to take place, a man must necessarily stop and turn his attention to what he must understand. For people, who with cries and the rumble of wheels are borne to the precipice, to hear what is being shouted by those who want to save them, they must first of all stop. (*pp*) Else, how will a man change his thoughts, his conception of life, if he shall without cessation, with infatuation, and even urged on by men, who assure him that this is necessary, work on the basis of the same false conception of life which he ought to change?

Men's sufferings arising from the false conception of life have become so acute, the good given by the true comprehension of life has become so clear and obvious to all, that, for men to change their life in conformity with their consciousness, they must in our time undertake nothing, do nothing, but must only stop, cease doing what they have been doing, concentrate themselves, and think.

(*qq*) The men of our Christian world are in the condition in which men would be, if they were tugging at a light load and kept pulling in the opposite directions, only because in their hurry they do not have the time to come to an agreement.

(*rr*) If in former times, when the wretchedness of the pagan life and the good promised in love had not yet been made so clear, people were able unconsciously to maintain slavery, executions, and wars, and with sensible arguments to defend their position, this has become absolutely impossible at present; the men of our time can live a pagan life, but they cannot justify it. (*ss*) The men of our Christian world need only stop for a moment in their activity, consider their position, apply the demands of their reason and heart to the conditions of life which surround them, in order that they may see that

their whole life, all their acts, are a constant crying contradiction to their conscience, reason, and heart.

Ask each man of our time, separately, what he is guided by and what he considers it is necessary to be guided by in his life, and nearly every one will tell you that he is guided by justice, if not by love, (*tt*) that he personally, recognizing either the obligatoriness of the Christian teaching, or the moral worldly principles, which are based on the same Christianity, submits to these conditions of life only because they are necessary for other people; ask another, a third, and they will say the same. (*uu*) And they are all sincere. According to the quality of their consciousness, the majority of the men of our time ought long ago to have lived as Christians among themselves. See how they live in reality: they live like beasts.[1]

(*vv*) And thus the majority of the men of the Christian world live a pagan life, not so much because they wish to live thus, as because the structure of life, which at one time was necessary to men with an entirely different consciousness, has remained the same and is supported by the turmoil of life, which gives them no time to bethink themselves and to change it according to their consciousness.

(*ww*) Men need but stop for a time doing what they are advised to do by Zola and by his supposed adversaries, by all those who, under the pretext of a slow and gradual progress, wish to retain the existing order, — stop stultifying themselves with false beliefs and, above all, with incessant, self-satisfying work in matters which are not justified by their consciences, and they will see at once that the meaning of their life cannot be the obvi-

[1] Thus, for the great majority of the men of our Christian world, the organization of their life is not the result of their manner of seeing and feeling, but is due to the fact that certain forms, once necessary, continue to exist up to the present, through nothing but the inertia of social life. — *F.*

ously deceptive striving after the individual, domestic, national, or political good, which is based on the struggle with others; they would see that the only possible, sensible meaning of life is the one which more than eighteen hundred years ago was revealed by Christianity to mankind.[1]

(*xx*) The feast has long been ready and all have long ago been called to it; but one has bought land, another is getting married, a third is examining his oxen, a fourth is building a railroad or a factory, or is busy with missionary work in Japan or India, or preaches, or introduces "Home rule" bills or a military law, or overthrows it, or passes an examination, or writes a learned work, a poem, a novel. They have all no time, no time to come to their senses, to bethink themselves, to look at themselves and at the world, and to ask themselves: "What am I doing? What for? It cannot be that the force which brought me into the world, with my qualities of mind and love, should have produced me with these for no other purpose than to deceive me, for no other purpose than that I, imagining that for the attainment of the greatest good for my perishing personality, I may dispose of my own life, and of that of others as I please, should convince myself at last that the more I try to do so,[2] (*yy*) the worse it is for

[1] The last paragraph runs as follows in the French version: "Let the people of our Christian world stop in their labours and reflect for a moment on their condition, and they will involuntarily be led to accept the conception of life which is given by Christianity, a conception which is so natural, so simply and so completely in correspondence with the needs of the spirit and the heart of humanity, that it would be produced almost of its own accord in the understanding of him who would be liberated, if only for a moment, from the fetters which hold him through the complication of his work and of the work of others."

[2] The more I shall find myself in contradiction with my reason and my desire to love and be loved, and the more disenchantment and suffering I shall experience. And is it not more probable that, since I did not come into the world spontaneously, but by the will of Him who sent me, my reason and my desire to love and be loved have been given me only to guide me in the accomplishment of this will? — *F.*

me, my family, my country, and the more I depart from the demands of love and reason which are implanted in me and which do not for a moment cease putting forth their demands, and from the true good. It cannot be that these highest qualities of my soul should be given me only to act as fetters on the legs of a captive, by interfering with me in the attainment of my aims. And is it not more likely that the force which has sent me into the world has produced me with my reason and my love, not for any accidental momentary ends, which are always contrary to the ends of other beings (which it could not do, since I and my aims did not yet exist when it produced me), but for the attainment of its own ends, to coöperate with which these fundamental qualities of my soul are given me? And so would it not be better for me, instead of persisting in following my own will and the will of other men, who are opposed to these higher qualities and who bring me to these misfortunes, once and for all to recognize as the aim of my life the fulfilment of the will of Him who sent me and in everything and always, in spite of all other considerations, to follow only those indications of reason and love which He has implanted in me for the fulfilment of His will?

Such is the Christian conception of life, which begs for recognition in the soul of every man of our time. To realize the kingdom of God, it is necessary for all men to begin to love one another without distinction of personalities, families, nationalities. For people to be able to love one another in this way, it is necessary for their life-conception to be changed. For their life-conception to be changed, it is necessary for them to come to their senses, and for them to come to their senses, they must first stop for a little while in that feverish activity to which they are devoted in the name of affairs demanded by their pagan conception of life; they must, at least for

a time, free themselves from what the Hindoos call "sansara," that turmoil of life which more than anything else keeps people from understanding the meaning of their existence.

The wretchedness of the pagan life and the clearness and diffusion of the Christian consciousness have reached such a point in our time that people need but stop in their turmoil, in order at once to see the senselessness of their activity, and the Christian conception would as inevitably form itself in their consciousness as water freezes in the cold, as soon as it is not stirred.

(*zz*) People need only make this life-conception their own, and their love of one another, of all men, of everything living, which now is to be found in them in a latent form, will as inevitably be manifested in their activity and become the prime mover of all their acts, as now, with the pagan conception of life, there is manifested love toward oneself, toward the family exclusively, toward one's nation exclusively.

This Christian love need only be manifested in men, and the old forms of life will fall of themselves, without the least effort, and there will be new forms of the blissful life, the absence of which presents itself to men as the chief obstacle in the realization of what their reason and heart have long been demanding.

If people employed but one-hundredth part of the energy, which now they apply to the performance of all kinds of material, unjustifiable acts, which, therefore, bedim their consciousness, in the elucidation of this same consciousness, and for the fulfilment of what it demands of them, then much more quickly and much more simply than we can imagine it, there would be[1] established the

[1] Would be accomplished amidst us the change which Dumas predicts and which the prophets have predicted, and men would attain the good promised by Jesus in His good news. — *F.*

kingdom of God, which He demands of them, and men would find the good which was promised to them.

"Seek ye the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

August 9, 1893.

THREE PARABLES

1895

THREE PARABLES

PARABLE THE FIRST

WEEDS grew up in a good meadow. To get rid of them, the owners of the meadow mowed them down, but the weeds only grew more numerous. And a good and wise husbandman visited the owners of the meadow, and among other instructions which he gave them, he said that the weeds ought not to be mowed down, for that made them only grow more numerous, but that they ought to be torn out by the root.

But, because the owners of the meadow did not notice, among the other injunctions of the good husbandman, the injunction that they should not mow down the weeds, but should tear them out, or because they did not understand him, or because, for reasons of their own, they did not wish to do so, the injunction about not mowing the weeds, but tearing them out, was not fulfilled, as though it had never existed, and the people continued to mow the weeds and to spread them. And although in the following years there were some men who reminded the owners of the meadow of the injunction of the good and wise husbandman, no attention was paid to them, and the owners continued to act as before, so that it not only became a habit with them, but even a sacred tradition, to mow down the weeds as soon as they appeared, and the meadow became more and more covered with weeds. It finally went so far that nothing was left in the meadow

but weeds, and people complained and tried to find all kinds of ways to mend matters, but they did not make use of the one means which had long ago been prescribed to them by the good and wise husbandman. And it happened that a man, who at last saw the evil plight in which the meadow was, and who in the forgotten injunctions of the husbandman had found the rule that the weeds were not to be mowed down, but to be plucked out by the root, reminded the owners of the meadow that they acted unwisely, and that their unwisdom had long ago been pointed out by the good and wise husbandman.

Well? Instead of verifying the correctness of what the man reminded them of, and, in case it was found to be correct, desisting from the mowing of the weeds, and, in case it was found to be incorrect, proving to him the injustice of his reminder, or recognizing the injunctions of the good and wise husbandman as ill-grounded and non-obligatory for themselves, the owners of the meadow did none of these things, but took umbrage at the man's reminder and began to scold him. Some called him a senseless and proud man, who imagined that he was the only one of them all who understood the husbandman's injunction; others called him a malicious misinterpreter and calumniator; others again, forgetting that he had not spoken in his own name, but had reminded them only of the injunctions of the universally respected wise husbandman, called him a dangerous man, who wished to spread the weeds and deprive people of their meadow.

"He says that we ought not to mow the weeds; but if we do not destroy the weeds," they said, intentionally misrepresenting the man as saying that they ought not to destroy the weeds, whereas he only said that the weeds should not be mowed down, but plucked out, "the weeds will grow rank and will entirely ruin our meadow. And why is the meadow given to us, if we are to raise weeds in it?"

And the opinion that this man was a madman, or a false interpreter, or had in view the detriment of people became so thoroughly confirmed that everybody scolded him and made fun of him. And no matter how much this man explained that, far from wishing to spread the weeds, he considered the destruction of the weeds to be one of the chief occupations of a farmer, as this was understood by the good and wise husbandman, of whose words he remined them, — no matter how much he spoke of this, — they paid no attention to him, because it was definitely decided that he was either mad and proud, who perversely interpreted the words of the good and wise husbandman, or a rascal, who did not call people to destroy the weeds, but to keep and increase them.

The same thing happened to me, when I pointed out the injunction of the Gospel teaching concerning non-resistance to evil. This rule was prescribed by Christ, and after Him at all times by all His true disciples. But, either because they did not notice this rule, or because they did not understand it, or because the fulfilment of this rule appeared too difficult to them, this rule was forgotten as time went on, and matters came to such a pass, as at the present time, that this rule has come to seem to people to be something new, unheard-of, strange, and even mad. And to me happened the same that had happened to the man who pointed out to the people the old injunction of the good and wise husbandman, that the weeds ought not to be mowed down, but plucked out by the root.

Just as the owners of the meadow, intentionally passing over in silence the fact that the advice was not to the effect that the weeds were not to be destroyed, but that they should be destroyed in a sensible manner, said, "We will not listen to this man, — he is a madman, he tells us not to mow down the weeds, but to multiply them," so in reply to my words, that, in order according

to Christ's words to destroy evil, it is necessary not to resist it with violence, but to destroy it by the root with love, they said, "We will not listen to him, — he is a madman: he advises us not to resist evil, in order that the evil may crush us."

What I said was, that, according to Christ's teaching, evil cannot be rooted out with evil, that every resistance to evil with violence only increases the evil, that, according to Christ's teaching, evil is rooted out with good, "Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, love your enemies, and you will have no enemy" (The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles). I said that, according to Christ's teaching, man's whole life is a struggle with evil, a resistance to evil by means of reason and love, but that from all the means of resisting evil Christ excludes the one senseless means of resisting evil with evil, which consists in fighting evil by evil.

And these words of mine were understood to mean that I said that Christ said that we ought not to resist evil. And all those whose life is based on violence, and to whom, therefore, violence is dear, gladly accepted such an interpretation of my words and, with them, of the words of Christ, and they declared that the doctrine of non-resistance to evil was false, insipid, impious, and harmful. And people calmly continue, under the guise of destroying evil, to produce evil.

PARABLE THE SECOND

Some people dealt in flour, milk, and all kinds of eatables, and vying with one another, in their desire to earn as much as possible and grow quickly rich, they began more and more to mix in with their wares all kinds of cheap and harmful ingredients: they mixed the flour with bran and lime, the butter with oleomargarine, the milk with water and chalk. And so long as the commodities did not reach the consumers everything went well: the jobbers sold them to the wholesale dealers, and the wholesale dealers sold them to the retailers.

There were a large number of warehouses and shops, and the trade seemed to be brisk. The merchants were satisfied. But it was very unpleasant and dangerous for the city consumers, who did not themselves produce their provisions and so were obliged to purchase them.

The flour was bad, and so were the butter and the milk, but as none but adulterated products could be found in the markets of the cities, the city consumers continued to buy them, and accused themselves and the poor preparation of the food for the bad taste and their ill health, while the merchants kept putting more and more foreign cheap ingredients into the articles of food.

Thus it went on for quite awhile; the city dwellers suffered, and no one thought of expressing his dissatisfaction.

A countrywoman, who had always fed her family on home products, happened to come to the city. This woman had all her life prepared food, and although she

was not a famous cook, she knew how to bake bread and cook dinners.

This woman bought provisions in the city and began to bake and cook. The loaves did not bake well, but fell. The flat cakes prepared with the oleo did not taste good. She set milk, but got no cream. She guessed at once that the provisions were not good. She examined them, and her guess proved true: in the flour she found lime, in the butter oleomargarine, in the milk chalk. When she saw that all the provisions were adulterated, she went to the market and began loudly to arraign the merchants and to demand of them, either that they should keep in their shops good, nutritious, unadulterated provisions, or should stop trading and shut up their shops. But the merchants paid no attention to her, and told her that their articles were of the best quality, that the city had been buying them from them for several years, and that they even had medals, which they showed her on their signs. But the woman would not be quieted.

"I do not need any medals," she said, "but wholesome food, such as will not give my children any stomach-ache."

"Dear woman, you have apparently not seen any real flour and butter," the merchants said to her, pointing to the white, clean flour in lacquered flour-chests, to the miserable semblance of butter in beautiful dishes, and to the white liquid in shining transparent vessels.

"How can I help but know," said the woman, "since I have done nothing my whole life but prepare food for my children and eat it with them? Your articles are adulterated. Here is the proof," she said, showing them the spoiled loaf, the oleo in the cakes, and the sediment in the milk. "Your articles ought all to be thrown into the river or burned, and other, good ones ought to be got instead."

And the woman kept standing in front of the shops

and calling out to the purchasers, as they came along, and the purchasers began to be disturbed.

Seeing that the bold woman might interfere with their trade, the merchants said to the purchasers: "Gentlemen, see how insane this woman is: she wants to starve people to death. She tells us to throw all the eatables into the river or burn them. What are you going to eat, if we obey her and stop selling you provisions? Pay no attention to her, — she is a coarse countrywoman and does not know anything about provisions, and is attacking us only through envy. She is poor and wants us to be as poor as she."

Thus the merchants spoke to the crowd assembled, purposely concealing the fact that the woman did not wish to destroy the provisions, but only to substitute good provisions for the bad.

Then the crowd attacked the woman and began to call her names. And no matter how much the woman assured them all that she did not wish to destroy the provisions, having all her life done nothing but feed others and herself, but that she wished that all the people who took upon themselves the provisioning of men should not poison them with injurious articles under the guise of food, — no matter how long she spoke and what she said, no attention was paid to her, because it was decided that she wanted to deprive people of the food which was indispensable to them.

The same thing happened with me in relation to the science and art of our time. I subsisted all my life on this food, and, whether well or ill, tried to feed others whom I could reach with it. And since this is my food, and not an article of commerce or luxury, I know beyond any doubt when the food is food, and when it only resembles food. And when I tried the food which in our time is being sold in the intellectual market under the guise of science and art, and tried to feed on it the people whom

I love, I saw that a great part of this food was not genuine. And when I said that the science and art in which people trafficked in the intellectual market were oleomargarine, or at least adulterated with great quantities of substances which were foreign to true art and true science, and that I knew this, because the products bought by me in the intellectual market proved inedible both for me and for my neighbours, not only inedible, but absolutely injurious, they began to shout and yell at me, and to impress upon me that that was due to my not being learned and to my being unable to handle such profound subjects. But when I began to prove to them that the traders in these intellectual wares were themselves accusing one another of deception; when I reminded them that in all times much that was injurious and bad had been offered to people under the name of science and art, and that, therefore, the same danger confronted us in our time, that this was not a trifling matter, but a spiritual poisoning, which was many times more dangerous than a poisoning of the body, and that, therefore, we had with the greatest care to examine those spiritual products which were offered to us in the form of food, and cautiously to reject everything spurious and harmful, — when I began to tell them all that, no one, no one, not one man, in not a single article or book, controverted my arguments, but from all the shops they began to shout, as to that woman: "He is mad! He wants to destroy science and art, that which we live by. Beware of him, and pay no attention to him! Come this way, gentlemen! We have the latest imported goods!"

PARABLE THE THIRD

Some people were walking. They lost their road, so that they no longer walked over a smooth road, but over swamps, thorn-bushes, and brushwood, which barred their way, and it became harder and harder to move on.

Then the travellers divided into two parties: one of them decided to walk straight on in the direction in which they had been walking, assuring themselves and others that they had not lost the right direction and would after all arrive at the goal of their journey. The other party decided that, since the direction in which they were now going was obviously wrong, — or else they would have arrived at the goal of their journey, — it was necessary to look for the road, and that, to find it, it was necessary without stopping to move as fast as possible in every direction. All the travellers were divided among these two opinions: some decided to walk straight ahead, while the others decided to walk in all directions; but there was found one man who, not agreeing with either opinion, said that, before going in the direction in which they had been walking, or beginning to move rapidly in all directions, in the hope of thus finding what was right, they should first stop and reflect on their situation, and then only, after having reflected upon it, undertake one thing or another. But the travellers were so excited by their motion, so frightened at their situation, so much wished to console themselves with the hope that they had not lost their way, but had only for a little while got off the road and would soon find it again, and, above all, were so desirous by means of motion to drown their terror, that

this opinion was met with universal indignation, rebukes, and scorn on the part of the men of either party.

"This is the advice of weakness, cowardice, and indolence," said some.

"It is a fine way to reach the goal of a journey, — just to sit in one place and not move on!" said others.

"That is what we are people for, and strength is given us precisely for struggling and labouring, overcoming barriers, and not for faint-heartedly submitting to them," said others again.

And no matter how much the man who had separated from the majority told them that by moving in a false direction, without changing it, we certainly do not approach our goal, but get away from it; and that we shall as little reach our aim, if we toss from side to side; that the only means of arriving at our aim consists in this, that, calculating by the sun or stars what direction will bring us to our goal, we shall choose it and walk that way; but that, to do so, we must first stop, not in order to stand still, but in order to find the true path and then walk on it unswervingly, and that, for the purpose of doing all that, it was necessary for us first to stop and bethink ourselves, — no matter how much he said all that, no attention was paid to him.

The first party of the travellers went in the direction in which they had been walking, while the second began to toss from one side to another; but neither of them came nearer to their goal, or got out of the bushes and thorns, and both are still wandering about.

Precisely the same happened with me, when I tried to express my doubt that the path on which we have blundered into the dark forest of the labour question and into the bog of the never-ending armaments of the nations, which will swallow us up, is not quite the road over which we ought to walk, that it is very likely that we have lost the road, and that, therefore, it would be well

for us for a time to stop in the motion which is obviously wrong, and to reflect, first of all, according to those general and eternal principles of the truth revealed to us, whether we are going in the direction which we intended to take. Nobody answered this question, no one said: "We are not mistaken in the direction, and are not blundering, — of that we are sure for such and such reasons." Nor did one man say that perhaps we were mistaken, but that we possessed an unquestionable means for correcting this mistake, without interrupting our motion. Nobody said either thing. But they all grew angry and hastened to talk together so as to drown my solitary voice: "We are indolent and behind the times, as it is. And here he preaches to us laziness, indolence, non-action!" Some even added: "Inaction!" "Pay no attention to him, — move on and follow them!" cried those who think that salvation lies in following the direction once chosen, without changing it, no matter what that direction may be, and also those who think that salvation is to be found in tossing in all directions.

"What is the use of standing? Why think? Move on as fast as you can! Everything will come out all right!"

People have lost their way and suffer from that. It would seem that the first great effort of energy, which ought to be made, should be directed, not upon the intensification of the motion which has enticed us into that false position which we now hold, but upon its arrest. It would seem to be clear that only by stopping could we in some way come to understand our position and find the direction in which we must go in order to arrive at the true good, not of one man, nor of one class of men, but at the true universal good of humanity, toward which all men and each human heart in particular are striving. Well? People invent everything imaginable, except the one thing which can save, or, if not save them, at least

alleviate their situation, — namely, that they should stop for a moment and cease increasing their wretchedness with their false activity. The people feel the wretchedness of their situation and do everything in their power to be freed from it; but the one thing which will certainly lighten their lot they positively decline to do, and the advice that they do so irritates them more than anything else.

If it were possible to be in doubt about our having lost our way, this relation to the advice that we bethink ourselves proves more obviously than anything else how hopelessly we have strayed and how great our despair is.

GOD OR MAMMON?

1895

GOD OR MAMMON?

> No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (Luke xvi. 13).
>
> He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad (Matt. xii. 30).

ENORMOUS expanses of the best land, from which millions of now suffering families might have gained a sustenance, are covered with tobacco, grapes, barley, hops, and, above all else, rye and potatoes, which are used for the preparation of spirituous beverages, wine, beer, and, above all else, whiskey.

Millions of working people, who might have been producing useful things for men, are occupied in the manufacture of these articles. It has been figured out that in England one-tenth part of the working people are busy manufacturing whiskey and beer.

What are the consequences from the preparation and use of tobacco, wine, whiskey, and beer?

There is an old story about a monk who disputed with the devil, saying that he would not let him into his cell, but that if he let him in, he would do the devil's bidding. The story tells how the devil assumed the form of a wounded raven, with a broken wing, who leaped about pitifully near the door of the monk's cell. The monk

took pity on the raven with the broken and bleeding wing and took him into his cell. Then the devil, upon entering the cell, offered the monk the choice of three crimes, — murder, adultery, or intoxication. The monk chose intoxication, thinking that in getting drunk he would only harm himself. But when he drank, he lost his reason, went to the village, and there succumbed to the temptation of a woman and committed adultery, and then murder, while defending himself against the husband, who came home and attacked him.

Thus are the consequences of drunkenness described in an ancient story, and such in reality are the consequences from the use of intoxicating liquors. A thief, a murderer, hardly ever commits a crime while in a sober state. From court records it may be seen that nine-tenths of all crimes are committed while the criminal is drunk. The best proof of the fact that the greater number of crimes are called forth by wine, may be found in the circumstance that in certain States of America, where wine and the importation of spirituous liquors are entirely prohibited, crimes have almost stopped: there are no thefts, no robberies, no murders, and the prisons stand empty.

Such is one of the consequences of the use of intoxicating liquors.

Another consequence is the harmful influence produced by intoxicating liquors upon the health of people. Not only does the use of intoxicating liquors produce especial, painful diseases, which are peculiar only to drinking people, but it has also been observed that drinking people who get sick with the common diseases do not convalesce so easily, so that the insurance companies always give preferred insurance on the lives of those who do not use intoxicating liquors.

Such is the second consequence of the use of intoxicating liquors.

The third, the most terrible, consequence of intoxicating

liquors is this, that liquor dims men's reason and conscience: the use of liquor makes people coarser, more stupid, and more evil.

What good is there then in the use of intoxicating liquors?

None at all.

The defenders of whiskey, wine, and beer used to assert that these beverages add health and strength, and warm a person up and cheer him. But it has now been proved beyond any doubt that that is not true. The intoxicating liquors do not add health, because they contain a powerful poison, — alcohol, — and the consumption of a poison cannot be anything but harmful.

It has been frequently proved that liquor does not add to a man's strength, by comparing for months and years the work of equally good workmen, of whom one drank and another did not, when it appeared that the one who did not drink did more and better work than the one who drank, and by this, that in those commands of soldiers which during expeditions receive whiskey, there are always more disabled men and stragglers than in those where no whiskey is distributed.

Similarly it has been proved that liquor does not warm a man up, and that the warmth from wine consumed does not stay long with one, and that after a short period of warmth a person experiences greater cold, so that prolonged cold is always harder on a drinker than on one who does not drink. Every year people freeze to death mainly from having warmed themselves up with liquor.

That the cheerfulness which comes from liquor is not real and not joyous, there is even no need of proving. Everybody knows what cheerfulness this is that comes from intoxication. One need but observe what is going on in the cities during the holidays in the restaurants, and in the villages during holidays, christenings, and weddings. This cheerfulness from intoxication always

ends in curses, fights, broken limbs, all kinds of crimes, and the degradation of human dignity.

Liquor gives neither health, nor strength, nor warmth, nor cheerfulness, but does people much harm. And so, it would seem, every rational, good man ought not only himself to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors and from treating others to them, but also with all his strength to try to destroy the habit of the use of this worthless and harmful poison.

But, unfortunately, nothing of the kind takes place. People value so much their old customs and habits, and with such difficulty get rid of them, that there are in our time very many good, sensible people, who not only do not abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors and from treating others to them, but even defend this use as best they can.

"It is not the wine that is blameworthy," they say, "but drunkenness. King David said, 'Wine gladdens the heart of man.' Christ in Cana of Galilee blessed the wine. If people did not drink, the government would lose its most important revenue. It is impossible to celebrate a holiday, a christening, a wedding without wine. How can we abstain from drinking wine in closing a bargain, in meeting a beloved guest?"

"Considering our work and labour, we cannot get along without drinking," says a poor labourer.

"If we drink only on special occasions and with moderation, we do not do any one any harm," say well-to-do people.

"A Russ taketh pleasure in drinking," said Prince Vladímir.

"No one suffers from our drinking but ourselves. And if we suffer, that is our business; we do not care to teach anybody, and do not want to be taught by any one; not with us did this begin, and not with us will it end," say unthinking people.

Thus speak drinkers of every condition and age, trying to justify themselves. But these justifications, which were of some value some decades ago, are now of no use. It was all very well to say this at a time when all thought that the use of intoxicating liquors added to a man's health and strength; when it was not yet known that liquor contained a poison which was always injurious to man's health; when men did not yet know of those terrible consequences of drunkenness, which now are before everybody.

It was possible to say this when there were not yet those hundreds and thousands of people who die an untimely death in terrible agonies, only because they have become accustomed to drinking intoxicating liquors and are no longer able to abstain from the use of them. It was all very well to say that wine was a harmless pleasure, when we did not yet see those hundreds and thousands of hungry, worn-out women and children, who suffer only because their husbands and fathers became addicted to the use of liquor. It was all very well to say so, so long as we did not yet see those hundreds and thousands of criminals, who fill the prisons, the places of deportation, and the mines, and of ruined lewd women, who fell into their state only thanks to liquor. It was all very well to say so, when we did not know that hundreds of thousands of people, who might have lived their lives in joy to themselves and to people, wasted their strength and their minds and their souls, because there exist intoxicating liquors, and they were tempted by them.

And so it is not possible in our day to say that the drinking or the non-drinking of liquor is a private matter, that we do not consider a moderate use of liquor to be harmful for us and do not wish to teach any one or be taught by any one, that this did not begin with us and will not end with us. It is impossible to say so now; the

use of liquor or the abstinence from it is in our time not a private, but a common matter.

Now all people — whether they wish it or not — are divided into two camps: some struggle against the use of the worthless poison, the intoxicating liquors, with words and deeds, by not using liquor themselves and not treating others to it; others in words, and still more powerfully by their example, maintain the use of this poison; and this struggle is now going on in every country, and has been particularly virulent in Russia for the last twenty years.

"When ye did not know, there was no sin on you," said Christ. Now we know what we are doing and whom we serve, when we use liquor and treat others to it, and so, if, knowing the sin of the use of liquor, we continue to drink and treat others to it, we have no justification.

Let no one say that it is impossible not to drink and not to treat others on certain occasions, — at holidays, weddings, and similar occasions, — that everybody does so, that our fathers and grandfathers did so, and that, therefore, we cannot act differently from the rest. It is not true: our forefathers and fathers gave up those evil and harmful habits, the evil of which became obvious to them; even so we are obliged to give up the evil which has become obvious in our time. But that liquor has in our time become a terrible evil, of that there cannot be any doubt. How, then, knowing that the use of intoxicating liquors is an evil, which ruins hundreds of thousands of men, shall I treat to this evil my friends who have called on me on a holiday, at a christening, or a wedding?

It has not always been as it is now, but everything has changed from worse to better, and this change did not take place of its own accord, but because people did what their reason and conscience demanded of them. Even now our reason and conscience demand in the most

emphatic manner that we should stop drinking liquor and treating others to it.

It is generally considered right to condemn and despise those drunkards who in saloons and restaurants drink until they lose their reason and are so addicted to liquor that they cannot contain themselves and spend everything they have for drinks. But those who take their liquor home, drink daily in moderate quantities, and treat their guests to it on proper occasions, are considered to be good, respectable men, who are not doing anything wrong. But it is these people that are more worthy of condemnation than the drunkards.

The drunkards became such only because the non-drunkards, without doing any harm to themselves, taught them how to drink liquor, — tempted them with their own example. The drunkards would never become such, if they did not see honourable people, who are respected by everybody, drink liquor and treat others to it. A young man, who never drank any liquor, will learn the taste and the action of liquor on a holiday or at a wedding of those honourable people, who are no drunkards, but who drink and treat their guests on certain occasions.

And so he who drinks liquor, no matter how moderately he may drink, no matter on what especial, generally accepted occasions he may treat people to it, commits a great sin. He tempts those who are not to be tempted, of whom it says, "Woe unto him that shall offend one of these little ones."

They say: "Not with us did it begin, and not with us will it end." Yes, it will end with us, if only we shall understand that drinking or not drinking liquor is not a matter of indifference for each of us; that with every bottle that we buy, with every glass of wine that we drink, we contribute to that terrible, devilish affair, from which the best human forces perish; and that, on the

contrary, by abstaining from liquor in our own case and putting a stop to the senseless habit of using liquor on holidays and at weddings and christenings, we perform a work of vast importance, — the work of our soul, the work of God. Let us but understand this, and drunkenness will end with us.

And so, no matter who you, reader, may be, — whether a young man just preparing for life, or a grown person, just established in life, an adult householder, or an aging man, — when the time of accounting for your acts is near, — whether you be rich or poor, famous or unknown, — whoever you may be, you can no longer remain in the middle between the two camps, you must inevitably choose one thing or the other, — to counteract drunkenness or contribute to it, — to serve God or mammon.

If you are a young man, and have never drunk, have never yet poisoned yourself with liquor, hold in esteem your purity and freedom from offence. If you have already succumbed to the offence, it will be harder for you to overcome it. Do not believe that liquor increases cheerfulness. Cheerfulness, true, good cheerfulness, is proper in your years, and liquor will only change your true, innocent cheerfulness into a drunken, mad, vicious cheerfulness. Above all else, beware of liquor, because in your years it is hardest to abstain from other offences, while liquor weakens the power of reason, which is so necessary in your years, and which counteracts the offences. Having drunk liquor, you will do something that you did not even think of in your sober mood. Why should you subject yourself to such a terrible danger?

But if you are a grown person, who have already made a habit of intoxicating liquors, or who are beginning to get used to them, — give up that terrible habit, while there is still time, or else, before you look around, it will take possession of you, and you may become just like those hopelessly ruined drunkards, who have perished

from liquor. They all began like you. If you should be able all your life to stick to a moderate use of intoxicating liquors and did not yourself become a drunkard, you, by continuing to drink liquor and treating others to it, may cause your younger brother, your wife, your children, to become drunkards, if they have not the strength to stop at a moderate use of liquor. Above all else, you must understand that upon you, as a person in the most powerful age of life, a master or mistress of the house, the guide of life, rests the duty of guiding the lives of your family. And so, if you know that liquor does not do any good, causes great evil to men, you are not only not obliged slavishly to repeat what your forefathers did, — to use liquor, to buy it and treat others to it, but, — on the contrary, are obliged to set aside this custom and substitute another for it.

Be not afraid that the abolition of the habit of drinking wine on holidays and at christenings and weddings will very much offend or provoke people. In many places people are already beginning to do this, by substituting savoury food and non-alcoholic drinks for the customary liquor; and it is only at first that people, only the most stupid of them, marvel, for they soon get used to this and approve of it.

But if you are an old man, of an age when, sooner or later, you shall have to account to God how you served Him, and you, instead of turning inexperienced young men away from liquor, — a terrible evil, which you could not help but notice during your life, — tempt others with your example, by drinking liquor or treating others to it, you are committing a great sin.

"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh."

If people only comprehended that in the matter of the use of liquor there is now no middle way, and whether

we want to or not, we must choose one or the other: to serve God or mammon.

"He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

SHAME!

1895

SHAME!

In the twenties of the nineteenth century the officers of the Seménovski Regiment, the flower of the youths of that day, for the most part Masons and subsequently Decembrists, decided not to use any corporal punishment in their regiment, and, in spite of the strict demands of military service at that time, the regiment continued to be a model one, even without the application of corporal punishment.

One of the commanders of a company of the Seménovski Regiment, upon meeting one day Sergyéy Ivánovich Muravév, one of the best men of that, and indeed of any, time, told him about one of his soldiers, a thief and drunkard, saying that such a soldier could not be brought to his senses in any other way than by means of the rod. Sergyéy Muravév did not agree with him and offered to take the soldier in his company.

The transfer was made, and the soldier in the very first days stole a pair of boots from his comrade, and with the proceeds from the sale of them got drunk, and acted riotously. Sergyéy Ivánovich called together the company and, calling the soldier to the front, said to him: "You know that in my company soldiers are not beaten or flogged, and I will not have you punished. For the boots which you stole I will pay with my own money, and I beg you, not for my sake, but for your own sake, to

reflect upon your life and to change it." And, having given the soldier friendly instructions, Sergyéy Iványovich dismissed him.

The soldier again got drunk and had a fight. And again he was not punished, but only admonished: "You will only harm yourself the more; but if you mend your ways, you will be better off for it. For this reason I ask you not to do such things."

The soldier was so surprised at this new way of being treated that he changed completely and became a model soldier.

The narrator of this story, Sergyéy Iványovich's brother, Matvyéy Iványovich, who, like his brother and all the best men of the time, considered corporal punishment to be a disgraceful remainder of barbarism, disgraceful not so much for the man punished, as for the men punishing, never could keep back tears of emotion and transport, when he spoke of it, and it was equally impossible to restrain tears, when listening to him.

Thus corporal punishment was viewed by cultured Russians seventy-five years ago. Now seventy-five years have passed, and in our time the grandchildren of these men preside in the capacity of County Council chiefs in courts and calmly discuss the question whether rods are to be administered or not, and how many rods are to be given to such and such an adult, a father of a family, often a grandfather.

But the leaders among these grandchildren sitting in committees and County Council assemblies hand in memorandums, addresses, and petitions, asking, in the name of hygienic and pedagogical purposes, that not all the peasants, but only those who have not finished a course in a popular school, be subject to flogging.

An enormous change has taken place in the midst of the so-called higher cultured class. The men of the twenties, considering corporal punishment to be a dis-

graceful act for themselves, found a way for abolishing it in the army, where it was thought to be indispensable; but the men of our time calmly apply it, not to the soldiers, but to all men of one of the classes of the Russian people, and cautiously, diplomatically, in committees and assemblies, with every imaginable excuse and circumlocution, address and petition the government as to this, that the punishment with rods does not comply with the demands of hygiene and so must be limited, or that it would be desirable to flog only such peasants as have not finished a course in the rudiments, or that the peasants who are included in the manifesto on the occasion of the emperor's marriage may be exempted from corporal punishment.

Obviously a terrible change has taken place in the midst of the so-called higher Russian society, and, what is most remarkable, this change has taken place at a time when in the very class, which it is assumed necessary to make submit to the disgusting, coarse, and stupid torture of flogging, there has in the last seventy-five years, especially in the last thirty-five years, since the liberation, taken place just such a vast change, only in the opposite direction.

While the higher, ruling classes have coarsened and morally fallen to such an extent that they have legalized flogging and calmly discuss the same, there has in the peasant class taken place such an uplifting of the mental and moral level that the application of corporal punishment to this class appears to the men of this class not only as a physical, but also as a moral torture.

I have heard and read of cases of suicide among peasants condemned to rods, and I cannot refuse to believe this, because I saw myself an ordinary young peasant, at the mere mention in the township court of the possibility of administering corporal punishment to him, grow as pale as a sheet and lose his voice; I saw also another peasant,

of about forty years of age, who was condemned to corporal punishment, burst out weeping, when, in reply to my question whether the decree of the court was carried out, he had to answer that it was.

I know also of a case where an acquaintance of mine, a respectable middle-aged peasant, who was condemned to be flogged for having, as usual, called the stárosta names, without paying attention to the fact that the stárosta wore the insignia, was taken to the township office, and from there to the shed where the punishment is administered. The watchman came with the rods, and the peasant was told to take off his clothes.

"Parmén Ermílych, I have a married son," said the peasant, turning to the township elder, and shaking with his whole body. "Can't this be omitted? It is a sin."

"The government, Petróvich, — I should gladly, — what is to be done?" replied the embarrassed elder.

Petróvich took off his clothes and lay down.

"Christ has suffered and told us to suffer," he said.

As the scribe who was present told me, everybody's arms trembled, and nobody dared to look into his neighbour's eyes, feeling that they were doing something terrible. And these people it is assumed indispensable and apparently useful for some one to flog like beasts, — indeed, even animals are not allowed to be tortured.

For the good of our Christian and enlightened state it is indispensable to subject to a most insipid, indecent, and offensive punishment, not all the members of this Christian enlightened state, but only one of its classes, the most industrious, useful, moral, and numerous.

The highest authorities of an enormous Christian state have not been able nineteen centuries after Christ to invent something more useful, clever, and moral for the counteraction of violation of laws than that the people who have violated the laws, grown men, and sometimes

old men, be undressed, thrown on the floor, and beaten with rods on their backsides.[1]

And the men of our time, who consider themselves to be leaders, the grandsons of the men who seventy-five years ago destroyed capital punishment, now most humbly and quite seriously ask the minister or some one else not to subject to flogging the adult Russians so much, because the doctors find this unhealthy, not to subject to flogging those who have finished a course, and to free from flogging those who should be flogged immediately after the emperor's marriage. But the wise government keeps profound silence in response to such frivolous requests or even prohibits them.

But is it possible to ask about these things? Can there be a question about them? There are certain acts, whether they be committed by private individuals, or by governments, which cannot be discussed coolly, condemning the commission of these acts only under certain conditions. And the flogging of adults from one of the classes of the Russian nation in our time, amidst our meek and enlightened Christian people, belongs to this class of acts. It is not right for the abatement of the transgression of all divine and human laws diplomatically to approach the government on the score of hygiene, school education, or the manifesto. Such things must either not be mentioned at all, or must be talked about as to their essence and always with contempt and horror. To ask that only such peasants as have finished the rudiments be not switched over their bare hips, is the same as if, where the punishment of an adulterous woman was that she be taken naked through the city, one should ask that the punishment be applied only to those women who do not know how to knit stockings, or something like that.

[1] Why this particular stupid, savage method of causing pain, and no other? Why not stick pins into the shoulder or some other part of the body, compress the hands or feet in a vise, or something like that? — *Author's Note.*

About such things people cannot "ask most humbly" and "prostrate themselves before one's feet," and so forth; such things can and must be only arraigned. Such things must be arraigned, because these things, when the aspect of legality is given to them, only disgrace us all, who live in the state where such acts are committed. Indeed, if the flogging of the peasants is a law, this law is made for me as much as for anybody, to secure my peace and well-being, but this cannot be admitted.

I do not want and am not able to recognize a law which violates all the divine and human laws, and I cannot imagine myself of one accord with those who write and confirm such crimes under the form of law.

If we have to speak at all of this monstrousness, we can say only this, that there can be no such law, that no ukases, Mirrors of Law, signatures, or command of his Majesty can make a law of a crime, and that, on the contrary, the vesting of such a crime (as this, that the adults of but one, the best class, may at the will of another, a worse class, — that of the gentry and officials, — be subjected to an indecent, savage, disgusting punishment) with the form of law proves better than anything else that where such an imaginary legalization of a crime is possible no laws exist, but only savage arbitrariness of rude power.

If we must speak at all of the corporal punishment which is administered to but one, the peasant class, we must not defend the rights of the County Council assembly or complain to the minister of the governor who protested against the solicitations about stopping the flogging of those who know how to read, or complain to the senate of the minister, or complain still higher up of the senate, as was proposed by the Tambóv County Council, but must never stop crying and shouting that the application of this savage punishment, which is no longer used in the case of children, to one, the best class of Russians, is a

disgrace for all those who take part in it directly or indirectly.

Petróvich, who lay down to receive the rods, making the sign of the cross and saying, "Christ suffered and told us to suffer," forgave his tormentors and after the rods remained what he had been. The torture accomplished upon him could have had but one result, that of making him despise the power which can prescribe such punishments. But on many young men not only the punishment itself, but frequently the mere acknowledgment that it is possible, has the effect of lowering their moral sense and provoking either desperation or brutality. But this is not yet the chief harm of this monstrousness. The chief harm consists in the mental condition of those men who establish, permit, and prescribe this illegality, those men who use it as a threat, and all those who live in the conviction that such a violation of all justice and humanity is necessary for a good, regular life. What a terrible maiming there must be in the brains and hearts of such men, frequently young men, who, as I myself have heard, assert with an aspect of profound wisdom that it is impossible not to flog the peasant, and that it is better for the peasant that he should be flogged.

It is these people who are to be pitied most for the bestiality into which they have fallen and in which they abide.

Therefore the liberation of the Russian people from the corrupting influence of the legalized crime is in every way an affair of vast importance. This liberation will not take place when those who have finished a course, or any other peasants, or even all the peasants, with the exception of one single peasant, shall be exempted from corporal punishment, but only when the ruling classes will recognize their sin and shall meekly submit to it.

December 14, 1895.

PREFACE TO CARPENTER'S ARTICLE, "MODERN SCIENCE"

1898

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Παντὶ λόγῳ λόγος ἴσος ἀντικεῖται.

I THINK that the following article by Carpenter on modern science can be of especial use in our Russian society, in which more than in any other European society there exists the wide-spread and deep-rooted superstition according to which it is thought that for the good of humanity there is no need whatever of the diffusion of religious and moral knowledge, but only of the study of the experimental sciences, and that the knowledge of these sciences satisfies all the spiritual demands of humanity.

It can easily be seen what evil influence (just like that of the religious superstitions) must be exerted upon the moral life of men by this gross superstition. And so the diffusion of the ideas of the writers who assume a critical attitude toward experimental science and its method is particularly desirable for our society.

Carpenter proves that neither astronomy, nor physics, nor chemistry, nor biology, nor sociology gives us a real knowledge of reality, that all the laws discovered by these sciences are only generalizations, which have an approximate significance as laws, — and that, too, only if we neglect or ignore the other conditions, — and that even

these laws appear to us as laws only because we discover them in a sphere which is so remote from us in time and space that we cannot see the discrepancy between these laws and reality.

Besides, Carpenter points out to us the fact that the method of science, which consists in the explanation of phenomena that are near and important to us by more remote phenomena, which are a matter of indifference to us, is a false method, which can never lead us to the desired results.

"Each science," he says, "has been reduced to its lowest terms. Ethics has been made a question of utility and inherited experience. Political economy has been exhausted of all conceptions of justice between man and man, of charity, affection, and the instinct of solidarity; and has been founded on its lowest discoverable factor, namely, self-interest. Biology has been denuded of the force of personality in plants, animals, and men; the 'self' here has been set aside, and the attempt made to reduce the science to a question of chemical and cellular affinities, protoplasm, and the laws of osmose. Chemical affinities, again, and all the wonderful phenomena of physics are reduced to a flight of atoms; and the flight of atoms (and of astronomic orbs as well) is reduced to the laws of dynamics."

It is assumed that the reduction of the questions of a higher order to those of a lower order will resolve the questions of the higher order. But this elucidation is never brought about, and what takes place is this, that, descending in our investigations lower and lower, from most essential questions to less essential ones, science finally arrives at a sphere which is absolutely foreign to man and is only contiguous to him, and upon this sphere it arrests its attention, leaving all the most important questions of man without any solution whatever.

What takes place is very much what a man would do,

who, wishing to understand the significance of an object before him, instead of getting nearer to it and viewing and feeling it from all sides, should go farther and farther away from the object, and finally should get away to such a distance that all the peculiarities of colour and all the unevenness of relief are destroyed and nothing but the outlines, which distinguish it from the horizon, are left, and here should begin to describe this object in detail, on the assumption that now he had a very clear conception about it, and that this concept, formed at such a distance, would contribute to the complete comprehension of the object. It is this self-deception that is partly dispelled by Carpenter's criticism, which shows, in the first place, that the knowledge which science gives us in the field of the natural sciences is only convenient methods of generalization, but by no means the representation of reality, and, in the second place, that that method of science, by which the phenomena of the higher order are reduced to phenomena of the lower order, will never bring us to the explanation of the phenomena of the higher order.

But even without anticipating the question as to whether experimental science will with its method ever bring us to the solution of the problems of life most important for humanity, the activity itself of experimental science in relation to the eternal and most legitimate demands of humanity startles us by its incorrectness.

Men have to live. To live, they must know how to live. And all men — whether ill or well — have always found this out, and, in conformity with this knowledge, have lived and moved on, and this knowledge of how men should live has since the days of Solomon, Moses, Confucius, always been regarded as science, as the science of the sciences. It is only in our day that the science as to how to live is not at all a science, and that only experimental science, which begins with mathematics and ends with sociology, is the real science.

From this results a strange misunderstanding.

A simple, clever working man, employing the ancient reasoning, which at that is common sense, assumes that if there are people who study all their lives, and who, in consideration of their being fed and supported by him, do his thinking for him, these men are no doubt busy studying what people need, and he expects science to solve for him those questions on which depend his good and the good of all men. He waits for science to teach him how to live, how to treat the members of his family, his neighbours, people of other nations, how to struggle with his passions, what to believe in and what not to believe in, and many other things. And what does science say to all these questions of his?

It announces to him triumphantly how many millions of miles it is from the sun to the earth, with what rapidity light passes through space, how many millions of vibrations the ether makes for light and how many vibrations air makes for sound; it tells him about the chemical composition of the Milky Way, about the new element, helium, about microcosms and their evacuations, about those points in the arm where electricity is centred, about X-rays, and such things.

"But I do not need any of these things," says the simple, sensible man. "I want to know how to live."

"What do I care what you want to know?" science replies to this. "What you ask about belongs to sociology. But before answering sociological questions, we have to answer zoological, botanical, physiological, in general biological, questions, but to answer these questions we must first solve physical, then chemical questions, and we have to come to an agreement as to what is the form of the infinitely small atoms, and in what manner the imponderable and inelastic ether transmits motion."

And people, especially those who sit on other men's backs, and who, therefore, find it convenient to wait, are

satisfied with such answers, and sit "flapping their eyes" in expectation of what is promised; but a simple, sensible working man, on whose back are sitting those men who busy themselves with science, the whole vast mass of men, all humanity, cannot be satisfied with such answers, and naturally asks in perplexity, "When shall that be? We have no time to wait. You yourselves say that you will find it out in a few generations. But we live now: to-day we are alive, and to-morrow we shall die, and so we must know how to live the life we are now in. Teach us."

"Foolish, ignorant man," science answers him. "He does not understand that science does not serve utility, but science studies what is subject to investigation, and cannot choose its subjects for study. Science studies *everything*. Such is the property of science."

And the men of science are actually convinced that the property of busying oneself with trifles, neglecting that which is more essential and important, is not their property, but the property of science; but the simple, sensible man begins to suspect that this property does not belong to science, but to men who are inclined to busy themselves with trifles, ascribing an important significance to these trifles.

"Science studies *everything*," say the men of science. But *everything* is too much; *everything* is the infinite number of objects, — it is impossible to study *everything* at once. As a lantern cannot at once illumine everything, but illumines only the one spot toward which it is directed, or that direction in which the bearer carries it, so also science cannot study everything, but inevitably studies only that toward which its attention is directed. And as a lantern illumines most powerfully the nearest spot to it and less and less well the objects more and more removed from it, and does not at all illumine those to which the light does not reach, even so human science, no matter what it may be, has always investigated in the

most thorough manner what to the investigators seems to be most important, less thoroughly what represents itself to them as less important, and entirely neglects the remaining infinite number of objects. But what has determined for men what is very important, what less important, and what is not important at all, is the common understanding, by the men who have busied themselves with science, as to what constitutes the meaning and aim of life, that is, religion.

But the present men of science, recognizing no religion, and so having no grounds on which to pick out, according to their degree of importance, the subjects of study, and to separate them from less important subjects, and finally from that infinite number of subjects which, on account of the limitation of the human mind and the infinitude of these subjects, will always remain unstudied, have formed for themselves a theory, — "science for science's sake," — according to which science does not study what men need, but *everything*.

Indeed, experimental science studies everything, but not in the sense of the aggregate of all subjects, but in the sense of disorder, a chaos in the distribution of the subjects studied; that is, science does not study preferably what is most needed by men, and less so what is needed less, and not at all what is entirely useless, but it studies everything, anything. Though there exist Comte's classification of the sciences and other classifications, these classifications do not guide them in the selection of subjects for study; what directs the selection is the human weaknesses to which the men of science are as prone as anybody else. Thus in reality the men of experimental science do not study everything, as they imagine and affirm, but what is most advantageously and most easily studied. What is most advantageously studied is, what can contribute to the welfare of those higher classes to which the men who busy themselves with the sciences

belong ; and it is easier to study everything which does not live. And so do the men of experimental science do: they study books, monuments, dead bodies.

This study they consider to be true "science." Thus what in our time passes for true "science," the only "science" (as the only book worthy of that name was called the "Bible"), is not the consideration and investigation of how to make the lives of men better and happier, but the collection and copying from many books into one of what has before been written by people about a certain subject, or the pouring of a liquid from one glass into another, the artificial splitting of microscopic apparatus, the cultivation of bacteria, the cutting up of frogs and dogs, the investigation of X-rays, the theory of numbers, the chemical composition of the stars.

But all those sciences which have for their aim the making human life better and happier, — the religious, moral, social sciences, — are not considered by the ruling science to be sciences, and are left to the theologians, philosophers, jurists, historians, political economists, who, under the guise of scientific investigations, are interested only in proving that the existing order of life, the advantages of which they enjoy, is precisely the one that ought to exist, and so ought not to be changed, but, on the contrary, ought to be supported in every possible way.

To say nothing of theology and jurisprudence, the most advanced of this kind of sciences, political economy, is most striking in this respect. The most widely disseminated political economy (that of Marx), in recognizing the existing order of life to be such as it ought to be, not only does not demand of men any change in this order, that is, does not show them how they ought to live in order that their situation be improved, but, on the contrary, demands the intensification of the cruelty of the existing order, in order that there may be a realization of those more than doubtful predictions as to what must

happen, if the people continue to live as badly as they are living now. And, as always happens, the lower a human activity descends, the more it departs from what it ought to be, the more does its self-confidence grow. The same has happened with science in our time. True science is never recognized by the contemporaries, but, on the contrary, is for the most part persecuted. Nor can it be otherwise. True science points out to men their errors, and new, untried paths of life. Either is disagreeable to the ruling part of society. But the present science not only does not contradict the tastes and demands of the ruling part of society, but is in full agreement with them: it satisfies idle curiosity, makes people marvel, and promises them an increase of enjoyments. And so, while everything truly great is quiet, modest, imperceptible, the science of our time knows no limits to its self-laudation.

"All the former methods were faulty, and so everything which formerly used to be regarded as science is a deception, error, trifles; our method is the only true method, and our science is the only true science. The progress of our science is such that thousands of years have not done what we have accomplished in the last hundred years. Proceeding on the same path, our science will in the future solve all questions and will make all humanity happy. Our science is the most important activity in the world, and we, the men of science, are the most important and necessary men in the world."

Thus think and speak the men of science of our time and the crowd is with them, whereas at no time and with no nation did science, all science in all its significance, stand on such a low level as at present. One part of it, the one which ought to study that which makes human life good and happy, is busy justifying the present bad order of life, while the other busies itself with the solution of questions of idle curiosity.

"What? Of idle curiosity?" I hear voices, which are indignant at such blasphemy. "And what about electricity, and telephones, and all the perfections of mechanics? To say nothing of their scientific significance, see what practical results they have produced. Man has overcome Nature, has subdued her forces to himself, and so forth."

"But all the practical results of the victory over Nature have so far — and for a long time — been applied to factories, which are injurious to the masses, to engines of destruction, to the increase of luxury and debauchery," replies a simple, sensible man, "and so the victory of man over Nature has not only not increased men's good, but has, on the contrary, made their condition worse."

If the structure of society is bad, as ours is, where a small number of men rule over the majority and oppress them, every victory over Nature will inevitably serve only for the increase of this power and this oppression. And so it is.

In connection with a science which does not take its object to be the study of how men should live, but the study of what is, and so is preëminently busy investigating dead bodies and leaves the structure of human society such as it is, no improvements, no victories over Nature can improve the condition of men.

"And medicine? Do you forget the beneficent advancement of medicine? And the inoculation of bacteria? And the modern operations?" exclaim, as usual, the defenders of the science of the last resort, adducing the advancement of medicine in proof of the fruitfulness of all science.

"We can by means of inoculation prevent diseases, and cure, we can perform painless operations, — cut up the internal organs, clean them, — we can straighten hunchbacks," generally say the defenders of science, for some reason assuming that one child cured of diphtheria

among all those children, who annually die in Russia to the number of fifty per cent., and in asylums to the number of eighty per cent., ought to convince people of the beneficence of science in general.

The structure of our life is such that not only children, but even the majority of adults, through bad food, injurious labour above their strength, bad housing, insufficient clothing, and want, do not live one-half of the years which they ought to live; the structure of life is such that infantile diseases, consumption, syphilis, alcoholism are taking possession of an ever greater number of men, that a great portion of men's labours is taken from them for preparations for war, that every ten or twenty years millions of men are destroyed by war, — and all this is due to the fact that science, instead of spreading among men correct religious, moral, and social ideas, in consequence of which all these calamities may naturally be destroyed, busies itself, on the one hand, with the justification of the existing order, and, on the other, with toys; and in proof of the fruitfulness of science we are told that it cures one-thousandth part of those diseased who fall sick for the very reason that science does not perform its proper work.

If only a small portion of those efforts, of that attention, and of that labour, which science wastes on those trifles with which it busies itself, were directed by it upon the establishment among men of regular religious, moral, social, even hygienic ideas, there would not be even one-hundredth part of those diphtherias, diseases of the womb, hunchbacks, on the cure of which science prides itself so much, effecting these cures in its clinics, the luxury of whose establishment cannot be diffused among all men.

It is the same as though men, who had ploughed a field badly and sowed bad seed in it, should walk through this field and cure the broken stalks, which grew up among the sickly ears, all the time treading down all the other stalks, and should adduce this their art of curing

the sickly stalks as a proof of their knowledge of agriculture.

For our science to become science and to be truly useful, it must first of all renounce its experimental method, according to which it regards as its business only the study of what is, and should return to the one rational and fruitful comprehension of science, according to which the object of its study is, how men should live. In this does the purpose and meaning of science consist; but the study of what is can be the object of science only to the extent to which this study contributes to the comprehension of how men should live.

It is this recognition of the insufficiency of experimental science and of the necessity of acquiring a different method that is pointed out in the present article by Carpenter.

CARTHAGO DELENDA EST

1898

CARTHAGO DELENDA EST

La Vita Internazionale and *L'Humanité Nouvelle* sent me the following letter:

"MONSIEUR: — *Dans le but d'être utile au développement des idées humanitaires de la civilisation* La Vita Internazionale (*Milan*), *avec l'appui de* L'Humanité Nouvelle (*Paris et Bruxelles*), *a cru devoir s'intéresser au difficile problème qui dernièrement s'est montré dans toute sa gravité et son importance à cause de la délicate question pour laquelle la France et le monde entier se sont passionés si vivement: nous voulons parler du problème de la guerre et du militarisme. A cette fin, nous prions tous ceux qui en Europe dans la politique, les sciences, les arts, dans le mouvement ouvrier, parmi les militaires mêmes occupent la place la plus éminente, de contribuer à cette œuvre hautement civilisatrice en nous envoyant les réponses au questionnaire suivant:*

"*1. La guerre parmi les nations civilisées est-elle encore voulue par l'histoire, par le droit, par le progrès?*

"*2. Quels sont les effets intellectuels, moraux, physiques, économiques, politiques, du militarisme?*

"*3. Quelles sont les solutions qu'il convient de donner, dans l'interêt de l'avenir de la civilisation mondiale, aux graves problèmes de la guerre et du militarisme?*

"*4. Quels sont les moyens conduisant le plus rapidement possible à ces solutions?*"

I cannot conceal that feeling of disgust, indignation, and even despair, which this letter provoked in me. People of our Christian world, enlightened, clever, good men, who profess the law of love and of brotherhood, who regard murder as a terrible crime, who, with few exceptions, are unable to kill an animal, all these people suddenly, under certain conditions, when these crimes are called war, not only recognize destruction, pillage, and the murder of men to be right and lawful, but themselves contribute to this pillage and these murders, prepare themselves for them, take part in them, and pride themselves on them. With this the same phenomenon is always repeated, namely this, that a vast majority of men, all the working people, those who do the pillaging and the murdering and bear the whole weight of this business, do not plan, or prepare, or wish these murders, and take part in them against their will, only because they are placed in such a position and are so minded that it seems to them, to each of them individually, that they will fare worse, if they refuse to take part in these robberies and murders and in the preparations for them; but it is only a very insignificant minority, which lives in luxury and idleness upon the labours of the working people, that plans and prepares those robberies and murders, and compels the working people to commit them. This deception has been taking place for a long time, but of late the impudence of the deceivers has reached the farthest limit: a large portion of the products of labour are taken away from the working people and are used for the preparations for these robberies and murders. In all the constitutional governments of Europe, the labourers themselves, all without exception, are called upon to take part in these robberies and murders, the international relations are intentionally made more and more complex, so as to lead up to war, peaceful countries are robbed without any cause, every year people are robbed and killed somewhere,

and all men live in constant fear of universal mutual pillage and murder. It would seem to be obvious that if such a phenomenon takes place, it is due to this, that the greater masses are deceived by the minority, to which this deception is profitable, and that, therefore, the first thing those who want to free people from the calamities of these mutual robberies and murders ought to do is to lay open the deception in which the masses are, to show the masses how the deception is accomplished, how it is maintained, and how to be freed from it. But the enlightened men of Europe do nothing of the kind: instead of it they, under the pretext of coöperating with the establishment of peace, at first gather in one city of Europe, then in another, and seat themselves with most serious faces at tables and discuss in what way best to persuade the robbers, who live by their trade, to stop committing robberies and become peaceful citizens, and then they put profound questions: the first, as to whether history, right, progress demand war, as though the fictions which we invent can demand of us a departure from the fundamental moral law of our life; the second question, — as to what can be the consequences of war, as though there can be any doubt in this, that the consequences of war will always be universal calamity and universal corruption; and, finally, the third question, how to solve the problem of war, as though there existed a difficult problem about how to free deceived men from the deception which we see clearly.

This is terrible. We see, for example, that healthy, peaceable, often happy people from year to year frequent gambling-dens, such as Monte Carlo, and leave there, for the advantage of the keepers of these dens, their health, their peace, their honour, and frequently their lives. We are sorry for these men; we see clearly that the deception to which these people are subjected consists in those temptations by means of which the players are enticed,

in the inequality of the chances, and in the infatuation of the players, who know that in general they will be losers, but none the less hope that they will at least once be more fortunate than others. All that is perfectly clear. And here, instead of freeing people from these calamities, instead of pointing out to them the temptations to which they are subjected, the certainty of their losses, the immorality of the play, which is based on the expectation of other people's misfortunes, we meet with distinguished men in sessions and discuss the questions as to how to arrange matters so that the keepers of the gambling establishments shall voluntarily close their institutions, we write books about this, and ask ourselves questions as to whether history, right, and progress do not demand the existence of gambling establishments, and what may be the consequences of roulette, — the economic, intellectual, moral consequences, etc.

If a man drinks, and I tell him that he can himself stop drinking and must do so, there is some hope that he will pay attention to me; but if I tell him that his drunkenness forms a complex and difficult problem, which we, the learned, will try to solve in our meetings, all the probabilities are that he, waiting for the solution of the problem, will continue to drink. The same is true of the false and intricate scientific, external means for the cessation of war, like the international tribunals, the court of arbitration, and other similar foolish things, when we with them keep in abeyance the simplest and most essential means for the cessation of war, which is only too obvious to anybody. For people who do not need war not to fight we need no international tribunals, no solution of questions, but only that the people who are subject to deception should awaken and free themselves from that spell under which they are. This means for the abolition of war consists in this, that the men who do not need war, who consider a participation in war to be a sin,

should stop fighting. This means has been preached since the most remote times by Christian writers, — Tertullian, Origen, and by the Paulicians and their continuators, the Mennonites, the Quakers, the Herrnhuters; about this means wrote Dymond, Garrison, Ballou; it will soon be twenty years during which I have in every way elucidated the sin, harmfulness, and senselessness of military service. This means was applied long ago, and has been applied with particular frequency, both by separate individuals in Austria, Prussia, Switzerland, Holland, Sweden, Russia, and by whole societies, such as the Quakers, Mennonites, Nazarenes, and of late the Dukhobors, a whole fifteen thousand of whom have now for three years been struggling against the mighty Russian government, in spite of all the sufferings to which they are subjected, without acceding to its demands that they take part in the crimes of military service.

But the enlightened friends of peace not only do not propose this means, — they cannot even bear the mention of it; and when they hear of it, they make it appear that they do not notice it, or, if they notice it, they shrug their shoulders with a significant mien, expressing compassion for those uneducated and senseless people, who use such an inefficacious, stupid means, when they have such a good means, which consists in throwing salt on the tail of the bird which you want to catch, that is, in persuading the governments, which live only by violence and deception, to renounce this violence and deception.

They say that the misunderstandings that may arise between the governments will be decided by tribunals or by a court of arbitration. But the governments do not at all wish for the settling of these misunderstandings: on the contrary, the governments invent misunderstandings, if they do not exist, because only misunderstandings with other governments give them an opportunity of maintaining the army on which their power is based. Thus the

enlightened friends of peace try to distract the attention of the suffering working people from the only means which frees them from the slavery, in which they are held from childhood by means of patriotism, and then by means of the venal priests of a corrupt Christianity, by binding men by an oath and, finally, threatening them with punishments.

In our time, when close peaceful relations have been established between the men of various nationalities and states, the deception of patriotism, which always demands the preference of one state or nationality to others, and which, therefore, always draws people into useless and ruinous wars, is too obvious for sensible people not to be freed from it; the deception of the obligatoriness of the religious oath, which is clearly forbidden in the Gospel professed by the governments, is, thank God, believed in less and less, so that it is only the fear of the punishment which is imposed on such refusals by the government, that for the majority of men serves as a barrier to refusing to take part in military service. But this fear, too, is only a consequence of the deception practised by the governments, and has no foundation but in hypnosis.

The governments may and must be afraid of those who refuse, and, in reality, are afraid of them, because every refusal undermines the prestige of the deception, in which the governments keep men, but those who refuse have no reason to fear the government which demands the crime. By refusing to do military service every man risks much less than in entering the army. The refusal to do military service, and the punishment, — imprisonment, exile, — are frequently only a profitable self-insurance from the dangers of military service. Upon entering military service a man risks taking part in war, for which he is being prepared, and of getting in the war into such a position that he will, under the most oppressive and agonizing of

conditions, be certainly killed, like one condemned to death, or crippled, as, indeed, I saw at Sevastopol, where a regiment came to a bastion where two regiments had already been killed off, and remained there until it, too, was annihilated. A second, more advantageous eventuality is this, that the one who does military service will not be killed, but will only fall sick and die from the unhealthy conditions of military service. A third eventuality is this, that, having been insulted, he will not hold out, will say something rude to his superior, will violate discipline, and will be subjected to a worse punishment than what he would suffer by refusing to do military service. The most advantageous eventuality is this, that, instead of imprisonment or deportation, to which he who refuses military service would be subjected, he will pass three or five years of his life in preparing himself to commit murder, in a corrupt circle and in a slavery similar to that in a prison, except for a degrading humility to corrupt men.

So much in the first place. In the second place, in refusing military service, every man, however improbable this may be, may none the less count on having to suffer no punishment, because his refusal will be that last arraignment of the government's deception, in consequence of which it will not be possible for any one to punish him, because no people will be found who are so stultified that they can coöperate in the punishment of the man who refuses to take part in their oppression. Thus the submission to the demands of military service is obviously only a submission to the hypnosis of the crowd, — a quite useless jumping of Panurge's sheep into the water to their obvious destruction.

But, besides the consideration of advantage, there is also another cause which ought to urge every man who is free from hypnosis and who understands the significance of his acts to refuse to do military service. A man

cannot help but wish that his life should not be a useless, aimless existence, but that it should be a service to God and men. Frequently a man lives his life, without finding an opportunity for this service. The call to take part in military service is that opportunity which presents itself to every man of our time. Every man, by refusing to take part personally in military service, either as a recruit or as a payer of taxes to the government, which uses these taxes for military matters, by this refusal in the most efficacious manner does a great service to God and men, because by this refusal he in the most efficacious manner contributes to the forward movement of humanity toward that better social structure, toward which humanity is striving and at which it must arrive.

But it is not only advantageous to refuse to take part in military service, and not only ought this to be done, — for the majority of the men of our time, if they are at all free from hypnosis, it is impossible not to renounce military service. For every man there are certain acts which are morally impossible, just as impossible as are certain physical acts. Such a morally impossible act for the vast majority of the men of our time, if one is at all free from hypnosis, is the promise of slavish obedience to strangers and immoral men, whose professed aim is to kill men. And so every man of our time not only will find it advantageous and necessary to refuse to take part in military service, but even impossible to refrain from doing so, if he is at all free from the stultification of hypnosis.

" But what will happen, when all men shall refuse to do military service, and there shall be no bridle and no fear on the evil ones, and the evil ones shall triumph, and there shall be no defence against the savages, — against the yellow race, — who will come and conquer us ? "

I shall not speak of the fact that the evil men have triumphed long ago and still continue to triumph, and,

struggling among themselves, have for a long time been ruling over the Christians, so that there is no cause for fearing what has happened long ago; nor shall I speak of this, that the fear of wild and of yellow men, whom we persistently irritate and teach war, is a barren excuse, and that for the imaginary defence against these wild and yellow men one-hundredth part of those armies which Europe now maintains would suffice; I shall not speak of all that, because the considerations as to what may happen to the world at large from such or such an act of ours cannot serve as a guidance for our acts and our activity. Man has given to him a different guide, one that is incontestable, — the guide of his conscience, by following which he knows beyond a doubt that he is doing what he ought to do. And so all the considerations about the dangers which confront the separate individual who refuses to do military service, as also about this, what danger threatens the world in consequence of such refusals, — all those are particles of that vast and terrible deception in which Christian humanity is enmeshed, and which is carefully maintained by the governments, which live by this deception.

From a man's acting as his reason, his conscience, his God commands him to act, nothing but the best can result, both for him and for the world.

The men of our time complain of the evil current of life in our Christian world. This cannot be otherwise, when in our consciousness we have recognized not only the fundamental divine commandment, "Do not kill," which was proclaimed thousands of years ago, but also the law of the love and brotherhood of all men, and when, in spite of this, every man of our European world in reality renounces this fundamental divine law, which he recognizes, and at the command of a president, emperor, minister, a Nicholas, a William, puts on a fool's costume, takes up instruments of murder, and says, "I am

ready, — I will strike down, ruin, and kill whomsoever you command me to."

What, then, can society be, which is composed of such men? It must be terrible, and, indeed, it is terrible.

Bethink yourselves, brothers! Do not listen to those rascals who from your childhood infect you with the devilish spirit of patriotism, which is contrary to goodness and truth, and which is needed only to deprive you of your property, and your freedom, and your human dignity; and do not listen to those cheats who preach war in the name of God, a cruel and revengeful God, invented by them, and in the name of the false Christianity, which they have corrupted, and still less to those new Sadducees who in the name of science and enlightenment, wishing for nothing but the continuation of the present order, gather at meetings, write books, and make speeches, promising to establish a good and peaceful life for men without their efforts. Do not believe them. Believe in nothing but your feeling, which tells you that you are not animals or slaves, but free men, who are responsible for your acts, and so are unable to be murderers, either by your own will, or by the will of managers who live by these murders. You need only stop and think, in order that you may see all the terror and madness of what you have been doing, and, having come to see it, may stop doing the evil which you yourselves hate and which ruins you. And if you stop doing the evil, which you yourselves hate, there will naturally, without your effort, like owls before daylight, disappear all those ruling cheats, who at first corrupt you and then torment you, and there will naturally be formed those new, human, fraternal conditions of life, for which Christian humanity, worn out from suffering, exhausted from deception, and stuck fast in insolvable contradictions, has been yearning.

Let each man without any finely spun and complicated considerations and assumptions fulfil what his conscience

indubitably tells him in our time, and he will know the justice of the Gospel words, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John vii. 17).

April 23, 1898.

TWO WARS

1898

TWO WARS

Two wars are at the present time being waged in the Christian world. One, it is true, has been ended, while the other is still going on; but they were waged at one and the same time, and the contrast between the two is striking. The first, now ended, was an old, vainglorious, stupid, cruel, untimely, obsolete, pagan war, the Spanish-American War, which by the murder of one set of men decided how and by whom another set of men was to be ruled. The second war, which is still going on, and which will be ended only when all wars shall end, is a new, self-sacrificing, sacred war, which is based on nothing but love and reason, the war against war, which (as Victor Hugo expressed it at one of the congresses) the best, most advanced part of the Christian humanity declared long ago against the other, the coarse and savage part of the same humanity, and which a handful of Christian men, the Dukhobors of the Caucasus, have of late waged with particular force and success against the powerful Russian government.

The other day I received a letter from Colorado, from a Mr. Jesse Glodwin, who asks me to send him "a few words or thoughts, expressive of my sentiments, in regard to the noble work of the American nation and the heroism of her soldiers and sailors." This gentleman is, with the vast majority of the American nation, fully convinced that the action of the Americans, which is, that they beat

a few thousands of almost unarmed men (in comparison with the armament of the Americans the Spaniards were almost unarmed), is unquestionably a "noble work," and that those people who, having killed a large number of their neighbours, for the most part survived and were well and fixed themselves comfortably in life, were heroes.

The Spanish-American War, to say nothing of the horrible things which the Spaniards had done in Cuba, and which served as the pretext for the war, resembles this:

A decrepit and doting old man, who was brought up in the traditions of false honour, to settle a misunderstanding that arose between him and a young man, challenges this young man, who is in the full possession of his strength, to fisticuffs; and the young man, who, to judge from his past and from what he has said more than once, ought to stand incomparably higher than such a settlement of the question, accepts the challenge with knuckles in his clenched fist, jumps upon the decrepit and doting old man, knocks out his teeth, breaks his ribs, and then ecstatically tells his exploits to a vast public of just such young men as he is, and this public rejoices and praises the hero who has maimed the old man.

Such is the one war which occupied the minds of all in the Christian world. Nobody speaks of the other war; hardly any one knows anything about it. The other war is like this:

All the states deceive the people, saying: "All of you who are ruled by me are in danger of being conquered by other nations; I look after your well-being and security, and so demand that you shall annually give me millions of roubles, the fruits of your labours, which I am going to use for rifles, cannon, powder, ships for your defence; I demand, besides, that you shall enter the organizations instituted by me, where they will make of you senseless particles of an immense machine, — the army, — which I

manage. While connected with this army you will cease being men and having your own will, but will do everything I want you to do. What I want to do first of all is to rule, and the means I use for ruling is murder; and so I am going to teach you to commit murder."

In spite of the obvious insipidity of the assertion that men are in danger from the attack of the governments of other states, which assert that they, in spite of their desire for peace, are in the same danger; in spite of the degradation of that slavery to which men are subjected when they enter the army; in spite of the cruelty of the business to which they are called, men submit to the deception, give up their money for their own enslavement, and themselves enslave one another.

And here there appear people who say:

"What you say of the threatening danger and of your concern about protecting us against it is a deception. All the states affirm that they want peace, and at the same time arm themselves against one another. Besides, according to the law which you profess, all men are brothers, and it makes no difference whether we belong to this state or to another, and so the attack of other states upon us, with which you frighten us, has no terror and no meaning for us. But the main thing is this, that, according to the law which was given to us by God, and which you, too, profess, who demand of us a participation in murder, we are clearly forbidden to commit murder or even any acts of violence, and so we cannot and will not take part in your preparations for murder, will not give you any money for the purpose, and will not join the gangs established by you, where you corrupt the reason and the conscience of men, by changing them into instruments of violence, who are submissive to every evil man taking this instrument into his hands."

In this consists the second war, which has for a long time been waged with the representatives of rude force,

and which of late has burned up with particular virulence between the Dukhobors and the Russian government. The Russian government has brought out against the Dukhobors all those instruments with which it can fight. These instruments are: the police measures of arrests, the prohibition of leaving the place of abode, the prohibition of intercommunication, the seizure of letters, espionage, the prohibition of printing in the newspapers any information on matters pertaining to the Dukhobors, calumny of them, printed in the periodicals, bribery, flogging, prisons, deportation, the ruin of families. But the Dukhobors, on their side, have put forth nothing but their own religious instrument, meek reasonableness and long-suffering firmness, and say: "We must not obey men more than God, and no matter what they may do, we cannot and will not obey them."

They praise the Spanish and American heroes of that savage war, who, wishing to distinguish themselves in the eyes of men and to receive rewards and glory, have killed a very large number of men, or themselves have died in the process of slaying their neighbours. But no one speaks or knows of these heroes of the war against war, who are not seen and heard by any one, who have died under rods or in stinking cells, or in oppressive exile, and still to their very last breath remain true to the good and to truth.

I know of dozens of these martyrs who have died, and hundreds who, scattered over the whole world, continue this martyrs' profession of the truth.

I know Drózhzhin, a peasant teacher, who was tortured to death in the disciplinary battalion; I know another, Izyumchénko, Drózhzhin's companion, who was kept awhile in the disciplinary battalion and then was sent away to the end of the world; I know Olkhóvik, a peasant, who refused to do military service, was for this sentenced to be sent to the disciplinary battalion, and on the

boat converted his guard, Seredá. Seredá, who understood what Olkhóvik said about the sin of military service, came to the authorities and said, as the ancient martyrs said: "I do not want to be with the tormentors, join me to the martyrs," and they began to torture him, sent him to the disciplinary battalion, and then to Yakútsk Territory. I know dozens of Dukhobors, many of whom have died or grown blind, who none the less do not submit to the demands which are contrary to the law of God.

The other day I read a letter about a young Dukhobor who was sent by himself, without any companions, to a regiment stationed in Samarkand. Again the same demands on the part of the authorities, and the same simple, unswerving answers: "I cannot do what is contrary to my faith in God." — "We will torture you to death." — "That is your business. You do your business, and I will do mine."

And this twenty-year-old boy, cast by himself into a foreign country, amidst hostile people, strong, rich, cultured people, who direct all their forces to conquering him, does not succumb and does his great work.

They say: "These are useless sacrifices. These men will perish, but the structure of life will remain the same." Even thus, I think, people spoke of the uselessness of Christ's sacrifice and of the sacrifice of all the martyrs for the sake of truth. The people of our time, especially the scholars, have become so gross that they do not understand, and in their grossness cannot even understand, the significance and the influence of spiritual force. A charge of ten thousand pounds of dynamite sent into a crowd of living men, — that they understand, and in that they see strength; but an idea, truth, which has been realized, has been introduced into life to the point of martyrdom, has become accessible to millions, — that is according to their conception not force, because it does not boom, and you do not see broken bones and puddles of

blood. Scholars (it is true, bad scholars) use all the power of their erudition to prove that humanity lives like a herd, which is guided only by economic conditions, and that reason is given to it only for amusement; but the governments know what it is that moves the world, and so unerringly, from a sense of self-preservation, look most zealously upon the manifestation of spiritual forces, on which depends their existence or their ruin. For this reason all the efforts of the Russian government have been directed upon making the Dukhobors harmless, upon isolating them and sending them abroad.

But, in spite of all their efforts, the struggle of the Dukhobors has opened the eyes of millions.

I know hundreds of old and young military men who, thanks to the persecutions of the meek, industrious Dukhobors, have had misgivings as to the legality of their own activity; I know people who for the first time reflected upon life and the significance of Christianity, when they saw the life of these people or heard of the persecutions to which they have been subjected.

And the government, which rules over millions of people, knows this and feels that it has been struck at its very heart.

Such is the second war, which is being waged in our time, and such are its consequences. Its consequences are of importance, and not for the Russian government alone. Every government which is based on the army and on violence is struck in the same way by this weapon. Christ said, "I have conquered the world." He has really conquered the world, if people will only believe in the power of this weapon which is given to them.

This weapon is, for each man to follow his own reason and conscience.

This is so simple, so indubitable and obligatory for every single man. "You want to make me a participant in murder. You demand of me money for the preparation

of the implements of murder, and you want me to become a participant in the organized gathering of murderers," says a rational man, who has not sold or dimmed his conscience. "But I confess the same law with you, in which not only murder, but even every hostility, has long ago been forbidden, and so I cannot obey you."

It is this means, which is so simple, that conquers the world.

Yásnaya Polyána, August 15, 1898.

PATRIOTISM AND GOVERNMENT

1900

PATRIOTISM AND GOVERNMENT

1

I HAVE several times had occasion to express the idea that patriotism is in our time an unnatural, irrational, harmful sentiment, which causes the greater part of those calamities from which humanity suffers, and that, therefore, this sentiment ought not to be cultivated, as it now is, but, on the contrary, ought to be repressed and destroyed with all means that sensible people can command. But, strange to say, in spite of the evident and incontestable relation of the universal armaments and destructive wars, which ruin the nations, to this exclusive sentiment, all my arguments as to the obsoleteness, untimeliness, and harm of patriotism have been met either with silence or with intentional misunderstanding, or, again, with the same strange retort: "What is said is that there is harm in the bad patriotism, jingoism, chauvinism, but the real, good patriotism is a very elevated, moral sentiment, which it is not only senseless, but even criminal to condemn." But as to what this real, good patriotism consists in, either nothing is said, or, instead of an explanation, they utter pompous, highfalutin phrases, or something which has nothing in common with patriotism is put in the place of this patriotism, which we all know and from which we suffer so cruelly.

They generally say that the true, good patriotism consists in wishing the real good for one's nation or state, the good which does not impair that of the other nations.

The other day, while speaking with an Englishman about the present war, I told him that the real cause was not any selfish aims, as is generally assumed, but patriotism, as was evident from the mood of all English society. The Englishman did not agree with me, and said that if that was true, it was due to the fact that the patriotism which was now animating the English was a false patriotism, but that the good patriotism, with which he was permeated, consisted in this, that the English, his fellow citizens, should not act badly.

"Do you wish that only the English should not act badly?" I asked.

"I wish this to all!" he answered, showing plainly by this answer that the properties of benefits — be they moral, scientific, or even applied, practical — are by their nature such that they extend over all men, and so the desire for such benefits for any one is not only no patriotism, but even excludes it.

Similarly the peculiarities of every nation, which some other defenders of patriotism intentionally substitute for this concept, are no patriotism. They say that the peculiarities of each nation constitute an indispensable condition for the progress of humanity, and so patriotism, which strives after the retention of these peculiarities, is a good and useful sentiment. But is it not obvious that if at some time the peculiarities of each nation, its customs, beliefs, language, formed an indispensable condition of the life of humanity, these same peculiarities serve in our time as the chief impediment to the realization of the ideal of the brotherly union of the nations, which is already cognized by men? And so the maintenance and preservation of the peculiarities of any nationality, Russian, German, French, Anglo-Saxon, provoking a similar

maintenance and preservation not only on the part of the Hungarian, Polish, Irish nationalities, but also on the part of the Basque, Provençal, Mordvinian, Chuvash, and a mass of other nationalities, does not make for the closer friendship and union of men, but for their greater and ever greater estrangement and division.

Thus it is not the imaginary, but the real patriotism, the one which we all know, under the influence of which the majority of the men of our time are, and from which humanity is suffering so cruelly, that is, not a desire for spiritual benefits for one's nation (it is impossible to wish for spiritual benefits for only one's own nation), and not the peculiarities of national individualities (that is a quality, and by no means a sentiment), but a very definite feeling of preferring one's own nation or state to all the other nations and states, and so it is a desire that this nation or state enjoy the greatest welfare and greatness, which can be obtained and always are obtained only at the expense of the welfare and greatness of other nations and states.

It would seem to be obvious that patriotism as a sentiment is bad and harmful; as a doctrine it is stupid, since it is clear that if every nation and state shall consider itself the best of nations and states, all of them will find themselves in a gross and harmful error.

2

One would think that the harmfulness and irrationality of patriotism ought to be obvious to men. But, strange to say, enlightened, learned men not only fail to see this, but also with the greatest persistency and fervour, though without any rational foundations, refute every indication of the harmfulness and irrationality of patriotism, and continue to laud its beneficence and exalted condition.

What does that mean?

Only one explanation of this remarkable phenomenon presents itself to me. The whole history of humanity, from the most remote times to the present, may be viewed as the motion of the consciousness of separate individuals and of homogeneous aggregates of them from lower to higher ideas.

The whole path traversed both by each individual person and the homogeneous groups of men may be considered as a consecutive series of steps, from the lowest, which is on a level with the animal life, to the highest which at a given historical moment may be reached by the consciousness of man.

Every man, like the separate homogeneous groups, — the nations, the states, — has always walked, as it were, over the steps of ideas. Some parts of humanity march on, others fall far behind, and others again, the majority, move in the middle. But all of them, no matter on what step they may be standing, having behind them the obsolete recollections of the past, and ahead of them the ideals of the future, are always in a process of struggling between the obsolete ideas of the past and the ideas of the future, which are just entering into life. What generally takes place is this, that when an idea, which in the past was useful and even indispensable, becomes superfluous, this idea, after a more or less prolonged struggle, gives way to a new idea, which heretofore was an ideal, but now becomes the idea of the present.

But it also happens that the obsolete idea, which in the consciousness of men has already given way to the higher idea, is such that the maintenance of this obsolete idea is advantageous for some people, who have the greatest influence in society. And then it happens that this obsolete idea, in spite of its sharp contradiction to the whole structure of life, which is changed in the other relations, continues to influence men and to guide them in their acts. Such a retardation of an obsolete idea has always taken

place in the sphere of religion. The reason of it is this, that the priests, whose advantageous position is connected with the obsolete religious idea, making use of their power, intentionally retain the obsolete idea in the minds of men.

The same takes place, and for the same reason, in the political sphere, in relation to the idea of patriotism, on which every state structure is based. Men who profit by it artificially maintain this idea, which no longer has any sense or use. They are able to do so, since they are in possession of the most powerful means for influencing men.

In this do I find an explanation of the strange contradiction between the obsolete idea of patriotism and the whole contrary train of ideas, which in our time have already passed into the consciousness of the Christian world.

3

Patriotism, as a sentiment of exclusive love for one's nation and as a doctrine about the virtuous sacrifice of one's peace, property, and even life for the defence of the weak against the murderousness and violence of their enemies, was the highest idea of a time when every nation considered it possible and just, for the sake of its own good and greatness, to subject the men of another nation to murder and pillage; but as far back as two thousand years ago, the highest representatives of the wisdom of humanity began to recognize the higher idea of the brotherhood of men, and this idea, entering the consciousness more and more, has in our time received the most varied realization. Thanks to the greater ease of inter-communication, the unification of industry, commerce, the arts and the sciences, the men of our time are so united among themselves that the danger of conquests, slaughter, and

violence on the part of neighbouring nations has entirely disappeared, and all the nations (the nations, not the governments) live among themselves in peaceful, mutually advantageous, amicable, industrial, commercial, mental relations, which they have no reason and no need to violate. And so it would seem that the obsolete feeling of patriotism ought to be destroyed more and more and to vanish completely, as superfluous and incompatible with the vitalized consciousness of the brotherhood of the men of the various nationalities. However, the reverse takes place: this harmful and obsolete sentiment not only continues to exist, but is even fanned more and more.

The nations without any rational foundation, contrary to their consciousness and their advantages, not only sympathize with the governments in their attacks upon other nations, in their seizures of the possessions of others, and in the use of violence in defending what has already been seized, — but themselves demand these attacks, seizures, and defences, and rejoice in them and are proud of them. The minor oppressed nationalities, which have fallen into the power of the larger states, — the Poles, the Irish, the Bohemians, the Finns, the Armenians, — reacting against the patriotism of the conquerors, which is crushing them, have to such an extent become infected by the oppressing nations with the obsolete, useless, senseless, and harmful sentiment of patriotism, that their whole activity is centred upon it, and they themselves, suffering from the patriotism of the powerful nations, are prepared out of the same patriotism to do to the other nations the same that the nations which have conquered them have been doing to them.

This is due to the fact that the ruling classes (meaning by this not merely the governments with their officials, but also all the classes which enjoy an exclusive, advantageous position, — the capitalists, journalists, the

majority of artists and scholars) are able to retain their exclusive and advantageous position, as compared with the popular masses, only thanks to the political structure which is supported by means of patriotism. By having in their hands all the most powerful means for influencing the masses, they always unswervingly maintain the patriotic feelings in themselves and in others, the more so, since these sentiments, which support the power of the state, are more than any other rewarded by that power.

Every official succeeds in his service in proportion to his patriotism; even so a military man can advance in his career only in a war, which is provoked by patriotism.

Patriotism and its consequences, the wars, give a good income to the newspaper men and advantages to the majority of merchants. Every author, teacher, professor, will make his position the more secure, the more he preaches patriotism. Every emperor and king gains glory in proportion to his devotion to patriotism.

The army, the money, the school, the religion, the press, is in the hands of the ruling classes. In the schools they fan patriotism in the children by means of history, by describing their nation as the best of all the nations and always in the right; in the adults the same sentiment is roused by means of spectacles, celebrations, monuments, and a patriotic, lying press; but patriotism is chiefly roused in them by this, that, committing all kinds of unjust acts and cruelties against other nations, they provoke in these nations a hatred for their own nation, and then use this hatred for provoking such a hatred in their own nation.

The fanning of this terrible sentiment of patriotism has proceeded in the European nations in a rapidly increasing progression, and in our time has reached a stage beyond which it cannot go.

4

Within the memory of all, not merely old men of our time, there took place an event which in the most obvious manner showed the striking stupefaction to which the men of the Christian world were brought by means of patriotism.

The German ruling classes fanned the patriotism of their popular masses to such an extent that in the second half of the century a law was proposed to the people, according to which all men without exception were to become soldiers; all sons, husbands, fathers, were to study murder and to become submissive slaves of the first highest rank, and to be prepared for the murder of those whom they would be ordered to kill, — the men of the oppressed nationalities and their own labourers who should defend their rights, — their fathers and brothers, as the most impudent of all rulers, William II., publicly announced.

This terrible measure, which in the rudest way offends all the best sentiments of men, has, under the influence of patriotism, been accepted without a murmur by the nation of Germany.

The consequence of this was the victory over the French. This victory still more fanned the patriotism of Germany, and later of France, Russia, and other powers, and all the people of the Continental powers without a murmur submitted to the introduction of a universal military service, that is, to slavery, which for the degree of degradation and loss of will cannot be compared with any of the ancient conditions of slavery. After that, the slavish submission of the masses in the name of patriotism, and the impudence, cruelty, and madness of the governments knew no bounds. There began a mad race, provoked partly by lust, partly by vanity, and partly by greed, for the seizure of foreign lands in Asia, Africa, and

America, and a greater and ever greater mistrust and fury of the governments against one another.

The destruction of nations on seized lands was taken as something self-evident. The only question was as to who was going to be the first to seize the land and to destroy its inhabitants. All the rulers have not only in the most obvious manner violated the most primitive demands of justice against the vanquished nations and against one another, but have also practised all kinds of deceptions, rascalities, briberies, forgeries, espionage, pillage, and murder, and the nations have not only failed to sympathize with all that, but have even rejoiced, because their states, and not foreign states, have been committing these evil deeds. The mutual enmity of the nations and states has of late reached such wonderful dimensions that, although there is no reason why one state should attack other states, all know that all the states are all the time standing opposite one another extending their claws and showing their teeth, and just waiting for some one to fall into misfortune and grow feeble, in order to be able with the least danger to attack him and tear him to pieces.

All the nations of the so-called Christian world have been brought by patriotism to such a degree of bestialization that not only the men who are put to the necessity of killing or being killed, wish for and rejoice at murder, but also the men who calmly live in their houses in Europe, who are not threatened by any one, thanks to the rapid and easy means of communication and to the press, — all men in Europe and in America, — during any war are in the position of spectators in a Roman circus, and just like them rejoice at the slaughter, and just as bloodthirstily cry, "*Pollice verso!*"

Not only the adults, but also the children, the pure, wise children, according to the nationality to which they belong, rejoice, when they hear that not seven hundred, but one thousand Englishmen or Boers were killed and

torn to pieces by lyddite shells. And the parents, I know such, encourage their children in such bestiality.

But more than that. Every increase of the army of one state (and every state, being on account of patriotism in danger, wishes to increase it) compels the neighbouring state to increase its army also for the sake of patriotism, which again calls forth a new increase of the first.

The same is true of the fortresses and fleets: one state builds ten ironclads, so the neighbouring ones build eleven; then the first builds twelve, and so on in an endless progression.

"I'll pinch you." — "And I'll strike you with my fist." — "I'll whip you." — "And I'll club you." — "I'll shoot you." Thus quarrel and fight only bad children, drunken men, or animals, and yet it is this that is taking place in the midst of the highest representatives of the most enlightened states, the same that are guiding the education and morality of their subjects.

5

The state of affairs is getting worse and worse, and there is no possibility whatever of arresting this degeneration, which is leading to certain ruin. The only way out from this situation, as credulous people thought, is now closed by the events of recent times: I am speaking of The Hague conference, and the war between England and the Transvaal, which followed immediately after.

If people who think little or only superficially were able to console themselves with the idea that international tribunals can remove the calamities of war and the ever-growing armaments, The Hague conference, with the war which followed upon its heels, in the most obvious manner showed the impossibility of solving the question in this manner. After The Hague conference it became obvious that so long as there shall exist governments with armies,

the cessation of armaments and wars is impossible. For an agreement to be possible, it is necessary for the persons agreeing to believe one another. But for the powers to believe one another, they must lay down their arms, as do bearers of truce, when they come together for a consultation.

But so long as the governments do not believe one another, not only do not destroy or diminish, but, on the contrary, keep increasing their armies, in conformity with the increase among their neighbours, and unswervingly through spies watch every movement of the armies, knowing that every power will attack the neighbouring one as soon as it shall have a chance to do so, no agreement is possible, and every conference is either a piece of stupidity, or a plaything, or a deception, or a piece of impudence, or all these things taken together.

It behooved the Russian government, more than any other, to become the *enfant terrible* of this conference. The Russian government is so spoiled by the fact that at home no one retorts to all those obviously lying manifestoes and rescripts, that, having without the least scruples ruined its own nation by means of armaments, having choked Poland, robbed Turkestan and China, and strangled Finland with particular fury, it proposed to the governments to disarm themselves, with the full conviction that it would be believed.

But, no matter how strange, how unexpected, and how indecent this proposition was, especially at a time when orders had been given to increase the armies, the words, enunciated in the hearing of all, were such that the governments of the other powers could not before their nations decline to participate in the comical, patently deceptive consultations, and the delegates came together, knowing in advance that nothing could come of it, and in the course of several months, during which they received good salaries, though they laughed in their sleeves, all of

them good-naturedly pretended that they were busy establishing peace among the nations.

The Hague conference, which ended in terrible bloodshed, — the Transvaal war, — which no one has tried to stop, was none the less useful, though in a different way from what was expected from it: it was useful in that it showed in the most obvious manner that the evil from which the nations suffer cannot be mended by the governments, and that the governments, even if they wished to do so, are unable to abolish either armaments or wars. In order to be able to exist, the governments must defend their nations against attacks from other nations, but no nation wants to attack another, or ever does attack another, and so the governments not only do not wish for peace, but even make efforts to rouse the hatred of the other nations toward their own. Having roused the hatred of the other nations toward their own, and patriotism in their own nations, the governments assure their people that they are in danger and must defend themselves.

Having the power in their hands, the governments are able to irritate the other nations and to evoke patriotism in their own, and they use every effort to do both, nor can they themselves help doing so, because upon this is their existence based.

If the governments were needed before to defend their people against attacks from other nations, now, on the contrary, the governments artificially violate the peace which exists among the nations, and provoke hostilities among them.

When it was necessary to plough, in order to be able to sow, ploughing was a sensible thing; but it is evident that it is senseless and harmful to plough, after the crops have grown up. And yet it is precisely this that the governments make their nations do, — destroy that union which exists and would not be impaired by anything, if there were no governments.

6

Indeed, what are in our time those governments, without which it seems impossible for men to be able to exist?

If there was a time when the governments were a necessary and lesser evil than the one which resulted from defencelessness in relation to organized neighbours, the governments have now become an unnecessary and much greater evil than all that with which they frighten their nations.

The governments, not only the military ones, but the governments in general, could be, I do not say useful, but harmless, only in case they consisted of infallible, holy people, as is assumed to be the case in China. But the governments, by dint of their very activity, which consists in the practice of violence, are always composed of elements which are the very opposite of holy, — of the most impudent, coarse, and corrupted men.

For this reason every government, and especially every government to which the military power is delegated, is a most dangerous institution in the world.

The government, in its broadest sense, with the inclusion of capitalists and the press, is nothing but an organization such that the great majority of men are in the power of the minority, which stands above them; but this minority submits itself to the power of a still more restricted minority, and this again to a still more restricted minority, and so forth, reaching at last one man or a few men, who by means of military violence gain the power over all the rest. Thus this whole structure is like a cone, all the parts of which are in the full power of the few persons, or the person, at the apex of the cone.

But the apex of this cone is seized by those men, or by that man, who is more cunning, more bold, and more unscrupulous than the rest, or an accidental heir of those who were bolder and more unscrupulous.

To-day it is Borís Godunóv, to-morrow — Grigóri Otrépev; to-day — the harlot Catherine, who with her paramours strangled her husband, to-morrow — Pugachév, the day after — mad Paul, Nicholas, Alexander III.

To-day — Napoleon, to-morrow — Bourbon or Orleans, Boulanger, or a company of Panamaists; to-day — Gladstone, to-morrow — Salisbury, Chamberlain, Rhodes.

And it is such governments that are invested with full power, not only over property and life, but also over the spiritual and moral development, over the education, the religious guidance of all men.

Men produce this terrible machine of power, letting any one who pleases seize this power (and all the chances are that it will be seized by the one who is morally worst), and slavishly submit to it, and marvel that they are faring badly. They are afraid of mines, of anarchists, and are not afraid of that terrible structure, which threatens them any minute with the greatest calamities.

Men found that, to defend themselves against enemies, it is useful for them to tie themselves together, as the Circassians do, when defending themselves. But there is no danger, and men still continue to tie themselves.

They carefully tie themselves in such a way that one man is enabled to do with them what he pleases; then they allow the end of the rope which binds them to dangle about, leaving it to the first rascal or fool to take it up and do with them what he wants.

Is it not precisely what the nations are doing, when they submit, and establish and support a government which is organized with military power?

7

To free people from those terrible calamities of armaments and wars, which they suffer now, and which keep growing greater and greater, we do not need congresses,

nor conferences, nor treaties and tribunals, but the abolition of that implement of violence which is called the governments, and from which originate all the greatest calamities of men.

To abolish the governments only one thing is needed: it is necessary that men should understand that the sentiment of patriotism, which alone maintains this implement of violence, is a coarse, harmful, disgraceful, and bad, and above all, immoral sentiment. It is coarse, because it is characteristic of only such men as stand on the lowest stage of morality and who expect from other nations the same acts of violence that they want to practise themselves; it is harmful, because it violates the advantageous and joyous peaceful relations with other nations, and, above all, produces that organization of the governments, in which the worst man can acquire and always acquires the power; it is disgraceful, because it transforms the man not only into a slave, but also into a fighting cock, bull, gladiator, who ruins his forces and his life, not for his own purposes, but for those of his government; it is immoral, because, instead of recognizing himself as the son of God, as Christianity teaches us, or at least as a free man, who is guided by his reason, — every man, under the influence of patriotism, recognizes himself as the son of his country, the slave of his government, and commits acts which are contrary to his reason and to his conscience.

Men need but understand this, and the terrible concatenation of men, called the government, will fall of its own accord, without any struggle, and with it will fall that terrible, useless evil which is caused by it to the nations.

Men are beginning to see this. This is, for example, what a citizen of the United States writes:

"The one thing which we all, farmers, mechanics, merchants, manufacturers, teachers, ask is the right to attend to our own business. We have our homes, love our friends, are devoted to our families, and do not interfere in the

affairs of our neighbours, — we have our work, and we want to work.

"Leave us alone!

"But the politicians will not leave us alone. They impose taxes upon us, eat up our sustenance, keep a census of us, call our youths to their wars.

"Whole myriads of those who live at the expense of the government are maintained by them, in order to impose taxes upon us; but to tax us successfully, permanent armies are maintained. The argument that the army is needed for the defence of the country is an obvious deception. The French government frightens the people by saying that the Germans are about to attack them; the Russians are afraid of the English; the English are afraid of everybody else; and now we are told in America that it is necessary to increase the fleet and to add to the army, because Europe may at any moment unite against us. That is a deception and a lie. The common people in France, in Germany, in England, and in America are against war. All we wish is to be left alone. The men who have wives, parents, children, homes, have no desire to go away to fight with anybody. We are peaceable and fear war, — we hate it.

"All we want is not to do to others what we do not want others to do to us.

"War is a direct consequence of the existence of armed men. A country which maintains a large permanent army will fight sooner or later. A man who is proud of his strength in a wrestling match will some day meet a man who considers himself a champion wrestler, and they will fight. Germany and France are only waiting for a chance to try their strength. They have fought several times and will fight again. Not that the masses wish for war, but that the upper classes fan in them their mutual hatred and compel people to think that they must fight in order to defend themselves.

"Men who would like to follow Christ's teaching are taxed, insulted, deceived, and drawn into the army.

"Christ taught meekness, humility, forgiveness of sins, and that it is bad to kill. Scripture teaches people not to swear, but the 'upper classes' compel us to swear on the Scripture, in which they do not believe.

"How can we be freed from these spendthrifts, who do not work, but who are dressed in fine cloth with brass buttons and costly ornaments, who are supported by our labours, for whom we till the soil?

"Shall we fight with them?

"But we do not recognize bloodshed, and, besides, they have the arms and the money, and they can stand it longer than we.

"But who composes the army that will fight us?

"This army is formed by us, our deceived neighbours and brothers, who have been made to believe that they are serving God, when they defend their country from the enemy. In reality our country has no enemies except the upper classes, who have taken upon themselves to guard our interests, if only we shall consent to pay the imposts. They consume our sustenance and rouse our true brothers against us, in order to enslave and degrade us.

"You cannot send a telegram to your wife, or your friend, or your commission dealer, unless you first pay a revenue, which is being collected for the maintenance of armed men, who may be used for the purpose of killing you, and who will unquestionably put you in jail, if you do not pay it.

"The only means consists in impressing people with the idea that it is bad to kill, in teaching them that the whole law and the prophets demand that we should not do to others what we do not wish that others should do to us. Silently disregard these upper classes, and refuse to bow before their martial idol. Stop supporting preach-

ers who preach war and put forward patriotism as something important.

"Let them go and work, as we do.

"We believe in Christ, but they do not. Christ said what he thought; they say what they think will please the men in power, — 'the upper class.'

"We will not enter military service. We will not shoot at their command. We will not arm ourselves with bayonets against the good and meek masses. We will not at the suggestion of Cecil Rhodes shoot at shepherds and agriculturists, who are defending their hearths.

"Your deceptive cry, 'Wolf, wolf!' does not frighten us. We pay our imposts only because we are compelled to do so. We will pay them only so long as we are compelled to do so. We will not pay any church tribute to the hypocrites, nor our tithes for your hypocritical philanthropy, and we will on every occasion express our opinion.

"We will educate the men.

"And all the time our silent influence will grow; even the soldiers who have been drafted into the army will waver before fighting. We will preach the idea that the Christian life in peace and good-will is better than a life of struggle, bloodshed, and war.

"Peace on earth will come only when men shall separate themselves from the armies and will wish to do to others what they wish that others should do to them."

Thus writes a citizen of the United States of North America, and on all sides and in all forms similar voices are heard.

Here is what a German soldier writes:

"I have taken part in two expeditions of the Prussian Guard (1866, 1870), and I hate war from the depth of my heart, since it has made me inexpressibly unhappy. We, the wounded warriors, receive for the most part such miserable rewards, that we really have to be ashamed of

having ever been patriots. I, for example, receive daily eighty pfennigs for my disabled arm, which was shot through at the storming of Saint Privas, on August 18, 1870. Many a hunting dog needs more for its maintenance. I have suffered for years from my disabled right arm. As early as 1866 I took part in the war against the Austrians, fighting at Trautenau and Königgrätz, and I have seen a lot of horrors. In 1870 I, being in the reserve, was again called out, and, as I have already said, I was wounded at the storming of Saint Privas: my right arm was twice shot down its whole length. I lost a good place (I was then a beer brewer), and after that I could not get it back. Since then I have never been able to get on my legs again. The intoxication has passed away, and the invalid warrior has nothing to live on but a beggar's pittance and alms. . . .

"In a world in which men run about like trained animals and are not capable of any other idea than that of outwitting one another for the sake of mammon, I may be considered an odd person, but I none the less feel in myself the divine idea of peace, which is so beautifully expressed in the Sermon on the Mount. According to my innermost conviction war is nothing but commerce on a large scale, — a commerce of the ambitious and mighty in the happiness of the nations.

"What horrors one passes through in connection with it! I shall never forget them, those pitiful groans, which penetrate me to the marrow of my bones.

"Men who have never done any evil to one another slay one another like wild animals, and petty souls of slaves draw the good God into it as an accomplice in these acts.

"My neighbour in the ranks had his jaws shattered by a bullet. The unfortunate man was insane from pain. He ran about like a madman, and in the burning summer heat was unable to find some water with which to cool

his terrible wound. Our commander, Crown Prince Frederick (later the noble Emperor Frederick) at that time wrote in his diary, 'War is an irony on the Gospel.' . . ."

Men are beginning to understand the deception of patriotism, in which all the governments are trying so zealously to maintain them.

8

"But what will happen when there shall be no more governments?" people generally ask.

There will be nothing; what will happen will be this, that which long ago ceased to be useful and now is superfluous and bad will be destroyed; what will be destroyed is the organ which, having become useless, has grown to be harmful.

"But if there shall be no governments, people will violate and kill one another," people generally say.

Why? Why will the abolition of an organization, which arose as the result of violence and which has been transmitted from generation to generation for the purpose of exerting violence, — why will the abolition of such an obsolete organization cause people to violate and kill one another? It would seem, on the contrary, that the destruction of the organ of violence would have the effect that people would stop practising violence and killing one another.

There now are people who are specially educated and prepared for killing and violating men, — people to whom the right to commit acts of violence is delegated, and who make use of an organization which is established for the purpose; and such violence and murder is considered to be a good and virtuous act. Then people will not be educated for the purpose, no one will have the right to do violence to others, there will be no organization of violence, and, as is not the case with the men of our time,

violence and murder will always and by all men be considered to be a bad thing.

If after the destruction of the governments acts of violence shall be committed, it is evident that they will be less than those at the present time, when there exist organizations specially established for the production of violence, and when there are conditions when violence and murder are considered good and useful.

The abolition of the governments will only destroy the traditional, useless organization of violence and its justification.

"There will be no laws, no property, no courts, no police, no popular education," people generally say, intentionally confusing the violence of the power with the different activities of society.

The abolition of the organization of governments, which are established for the purpose of exerting violence against people, does not bring with it the destruction of what is rational and good, and so what is non-violating in the laws, the courts, the property, the police defence, the financial institutions, the popular education. On the contrary, the absence of the rude power of the governments, whose only purpose is to support themselves, will contribute to a more rational and just public organization, which is in no need of violence. Courts, public affairs, and popular education, all that will exist to the extent to which the nations shall need them, and in a form which will not contain any evil that is connected with the present governmental organization; only that will be destroyed which was bad and interfered with the free manifestation of the will of the nations.

But even if we admit that with the absence of the governments there will occur disturbances and inner conflicts, the state of affairs would even in that case be better than what it is now. The present condition of the nations is such that it is hard to imagine it worse. The masses are

all ruined, and the ruin must inevitably keep growing greater. All the men are turned into military slaves and must at any moment await the command to go out and kill and be killed. For what else shall they wait? That the ruined nations shall starve to death? That, indeed, is now taking place in Russia, Italy, and India. Or that not only the men, but also the women shall be drafted into the army? In the Transvaal they are beginning to do so.

Thus, even if the absence of government should actually mean anarchy in the negative, disorderly sense of the word (which it does not at all mean), no disorders of anarchy could be worse than the condition to which the governments have already brought their nations and toward which they are leading them.

And so the liberation from patriotism and the destruction of the despotism of the governments which is based upon it cannot help but be useful to people.

9

Bethink yourselves, people, and, for the sake of your bodily and spiritual good, and for the same good of your brothers and sisters, stop, think, reflect on what you are doing!

Bethink yourselves and understand that not the Boers, English, French, Germans, Bohemians, Finns, Russians are your enemies, but that the only enemies are you yourselves, who with your patriotism support the governments, which oppress you and cause your misfortunes.

They undertook to defend you against dangers, and have carried this condition of defence to such an extent that you have all become soldiers and slaves, that you are all ruined, that you are being ruined more and more, and may and must expect at any moment the breaking of the

strained string and the terrible slaughter of you and your children.

No matter how great the slaughter may be and how it may end, the condition will remain the same. Even so and with still greater tension will the governments arm and destroy and corrupt you and your children, and no one will help you to stop it all, if you are not going to help yourselves.

There is but one help, and that is to destroy that terrible concatenation of the cone of violence, with which those who succeed in getting to the apex of the cone dominate the whole nation, and dominate the more surely, the more cruel and inhuman they are, as we know from the case of Napoleon, Nicholas I., Bismarck, Chamberlain, Rhodes, and our dictators who rule the nation in the name of the Tsar.

There is but one means for destroying this concatenation, and that is, to awaken from the hypnosis of patriotism.

You must understand that all the evil from which you suffer you are causing yourselves, in that you submit to those suggestions by means of which you are deceived by the emperors, kings, members of parliaments, rulers, military men, capitalists, clergy, authors, artists, — by all those who need this deception of patriotism in order to be able to live by your labours.

Whoever you may be, — a Frenchman, Russian, Pole, Englishman, Irishman, German, Bohemian, — you must understand that all our real human interests, whatever they be, — agricultural, industrial, commercial, artistic, or scientific, — all these interests, like all the pleasures and joys, in no way oppose the interests of the other nations and states, and that you are, by means of a mutual interaction, exchange of services, the joy of a broad brotherly communion, of an exchange not only of wares, but also of sentiments, united with the men of the other nations.

You must understand that the questions as to who succeeds in seizing Wei-hai-wei, Port Arthur, or Cuba — whether it is your government or another — are by no means a matter of indifference to you, but that every seizure made by your government is detrimental to you, because it inevitably brings with it all kinds of influences, which your government will exert against you, in order to compel you to take part in robberies and acts of violence, which are necessary for the seizures and for the retention of what has been seized. You must understand that your life can in no way be improved by this, that Alsace will be German or French, and that Ireland and Poland are free or enslaved: no matter whose they may be, you can live wherever you please; even if you were an Alsatian, an Irishman, or a Pole, — you must understand that every fanning of patriotism will only make your position worse, because the enslavement of your nation has resulted only from the struggle of patriotisms, and that every manifestation of patriotism in one nation increases the reaction against it in another. You must understand that you can save yourselves from all your calamities only when you free yourselves from the obsolete idea of patriotism and from the obedience to the governments which is based upon it, and when you shall boldly enter into the sphere of that higher idea of the brotherly union of the nations, which has long ago entered into life and is calling you to itself from all sides.

Let men understand that they are not the sons of any countries or governments, but the sons of God, and that, therefore, they cannot be slaves, nor enemies of other men, and all those senseless, now quite useless, pernicious institutions, bequeathed by antiquity, which are called governments, and all those sufferings, acts of violence, degradations, crimes, which they bring with them, will disappear of their own accord.

Pirógovo, May 10, 1900.

"THOU SHALT NOT KILL"

1900

"THOU SHALT NOT KILL"

Thou shalt not kill (Ex. xx. 13).

The disciple is not above his master; but every one that is perfect shall be as his master (Luke vi. 40).

For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword (Matt. xxvi. 52).

Therefore all the things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them (Matt. vii. 12).

When kings, like Charles I., Louis XVI., or Maximilian of Mexico, are sentenced to death, or when they are killed in court revolutions, as were Peter III., Paul, and all kinds of sultans, shahs, and khans, there is generally a silence on the subject; but when they are killed without a trial and without court revolutions, as was the case with Henry IV., Alexander II., the Empress of Austria, the Shah of Persia, and now Humbert, such murders rouse the greatest indignation and amazement among kings, emperors, and their retinues, as though these men did not take part in murders, did not make use of them, did not prescribe them. And yet, the very best of the kings slain, such as Alexander II. and Humbert, were the authors, participants, and accomplices — to say nothing of domestic executions — in the murder of tens of thousands of men, who died on fields of battle; while bad kings and emperors have been the authors of hundreds of thousands, of millions, of murders.

Christ's teaching has taken the place of the law, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," but those men

who have always kept that law, and even now keep it, and apply it in terrific proportions in their punishments and in wars, and, in addition to "an eye for an eye," without any provocation command men to kill thousands, as they do when they declare war, have no right to be provoked at the application to them of this law in such a small and insignificant measure, that hardly one king or emperor is killed to one hundred thousand or, perhaps, one million of those killed by command and with the consent of kings and emperors. Kings and emperors not only need not be provoked at such murders as those of Alexander II. and Humbert, but should only marvel how rare such murders are after the constant and universal example of murder which they give to men.

The men of the masses are so hypnotized that they see and do not understand the significance of what is constantly done to them. They see the constant cares of the kings, emperors, presidents, about the disciplined army, they see those inspections, manœuvres, parades, which they practise and which they boast of before one another, and they run like mad to see their brothers, who are dressed up in stupid, variegated, sparkling uniforms, by the sound of drums and horns transformed into machines and, at the shout of one man, performing in a body the same motions, and they do not understand what it means; but the meaning of this instruction is very simple and clear: it is nothing but a preparation for murder.

It is the stultification of men, in order to make of them instruments of murder. It is only kings, emperors, and presidents who do this, manage this, and pride themselves on it. And it is these men, who are specially interested in murder, who have made a profession of murder, who always wear military uniforms and instruments of murder, — the sword at their side, — that are terrified and provoked, when one of them is killed.

The murders of kings, like the late murder of Humbert,

are not terrible on account of their cruelty. The acts committed by order of kings and emperors — not only in the past, as the Night of Bartholomew, the massacres for the sake of faith, the terrible pacifications of peasant risings, the Versailles slaughters, but also the present governmental executions, the starvations in solitary cells and disciplinary battalions, the hangings, the chopping off of heads, the shooting, and the slaughters in war — are incomparably more cruel than the murders committed by the anarchists. Nor are these murders terrible on account of not having been deserved. If Alexander II. and Humbert did not deserve to be killed, how much less deserved to be killed those thousands of Russians who perished at Plevna, and of Italians who perished in Abyssinia. Such murders are not terrible on account of their cruelty or the innocence of the murdered, but on account of the senselessness of those who commit them.

If the murderers of the kings do that under the influence of a personal sentiment of indignation, provoked by the sufferings of an enslaved nation, as the authors of which to them appear Alexander, Carnot, Humbert, or under the influence of a personal feeling of revenge, such acts, however immoral, are comprehensible; but how is it that an organization of men — of the anarchists, as they now say — which sent Bressi out, and which is threatening another emperor, has not been able to invent anything better for the amelioration of men's condition than the murder of those men whose annihilation can be as useful as the cutting off of the head of that fabulous monster, when in place of the one cut off there immediately grew out a new one? Kings and emperors have long ago arranged things in the same manner as in a magazine rifle: the moment one bullet flies out, another takes its place, — *le roi est mort, vive le roi!* So what sense is there in killing them?

Only after a most superficial reflection can the murder

of these men appear as a means for saving the people from oppression and from wars, which cause the ruin of human lives.

We need only recall that such oppressions and such wars have always existed, independently of who was at the head of the governments, — whether it was Nicholas or Alexander, Frederick or William, Napoleon or Louis, Palmerston or Gladstone, McKinley or anybody else, — to understand that it is not any definite class of men who cause these oppressions and wars from which the nations suffer. The calamities of men are not due to separate individuals, but to such a structure of society that all men are united among themselves in such a way that all are in the power of a few men (or, more frequently, of one man), who are so corrupted by this, their unnatural position of deciding the fate and lives of millions of men, that they are all the time in a morbid state, all the time obsessed by a mania of greatness, which is imperceptible in them only in consequence of their exclusive position.

In the first place, these men are from their earliest childhood and up to their death surrounded by the most senseless luxury and are all the time surrounded by an atmosphere of lying and servility; their whole education, all their occupations, everything is centred in one thing, in the study of former murders, of the best methods of killing in our time, of the best preparations for murder. From earliest childhood they are taught every possible way of killing, and they always carry about them instruments of murder, swords and sabres, and are dressed up in all kinds of uniforms, order parades, inspections, manœuvres, visit one another, presenting decorations and regiments to one another, and not only is there not a single man to name what they are doing by its real name, to tell them that the occupation with preparations for murder is detestable and criminal, but from all sides they hear nothing but approval, nothing but transports in

consequence of this their activity. At every appearance of theirs in public, at every parade and inspection, a crowd of people runs after them, greeting them ecstatically, and it seems to them that it is the whole nation that is expressing its approval of their activity. That part of the press which they see, and which to them appears as the expression of the sentiments of the whole nation or of its best representatives, in the most servile manner proclaims all their words and acts, no matter how stupid and bad they may be. The men and women about them, both clerical and lay, — all of them men who do not esteem human dignity, — in their attempt to outstrip one another in refined flattery, are subservient to them in everything and in everything deceive them, giving them no chance to see real life. These men may live a hundred years without seeing a real free man and without ever hearing the truth. One is often frightened, hearing the words and seeing the acts of these men; but we need only consider their situation, to understand that any man would act similarly in their place. A sensible man, upon finding himself in their place, can do but one sensible thing, and that is, get out of that situation: if he remains in it, he will do the same.

Indeed, what must be going on in the head of the German William, a narrow-minded, half-educated, vainglorious man, with the ideal of a German Junker, when there is not a stupid and abominable utterance by him which is not met by an ecstatic "Hoch!" and is not commented upon by the whole press of Europe as something extremely significant. Let him say that the soldiers must by his will kill even their own fathers, and they shout "Hurrah!" Let him say that the Gospel ought to be introduced with the iron fist, — "Hurrah!" Let him say that in China the army must not make any captives, but must kill all men, and he is not put into a lunatic asylum, but they shout "Hurrah!" and sail for China to

execute his command. Or the naturally meek Nicholas II. begins his reign by announcing to respectable old men, in reply to their expressed desire to deliberate on their affairs, that self-government is a senseless dream, and the organs of the press, the men whom he sees, extol him for it. He proposes a childish, stupid, and deceptive project of a universal peace, and at the same time makes preparations for increasing his army, and there is no limit to the laudations of his wisdom and virtue. Without any necessity, senselessly, and pitilessly he torments a whole nation, the Finns, and again he hears nothing but approval. He finally causes the Chinese slaughter, which is terrible for its injustice, cruelty, and incompatibility with the project of peace, and all people, on all sides, laud him simultaneously for his victories and for the continuation of his father's peaceful policy.

Indeed, what must be going on in the heads and hearts of these men?

Thus it is not Alexander, Humbert, William, Nicholas, and Chamberlain, who guide the oppressions and wars of the nations, that are the authors of the oppressions of the masses and the murders in wars, but those who have put them in the positions of rulers over the lives of men, and support them in these positions. And so Alexander, Nicholas, William, Humbert, are not to be killed, but men are to stop supporting the order of society which produces them. What supports the present order of society is the egotism and stupidity of men who sell their freedom and honour for their insignificant material advantages.

The men who stand on the lower rungs of the ladder, partly in consequence of their stultification by their patriotic and pseudo-religious education, surrender their freedom and feeling of human dignity in favour of the men who stand above them and who offer them material advantages. In the same condition are the men who stand on a somewhat higher rung of the ladder, and

who, also in consequence of their stultification and personal advantage, surrender their freedom and human dignity; the same is true of those who stand still higher, and thus it goes on to the highest rungs, — to those persons, or to that one person, who stands at the apex of the cone and who has nothing to acquire, whose only motive for action is love of power and vainglory, and who is generally so corrupted and stultified by the power over the life and death of men and the flattery which is connected with it and the servility of those who surround him, that, without ceasing to do evil, he is fully convinced that he is benefiting humanity.

The nations, by themselves sacrificing their human dignity for their own advantage, produce these men, who cannot do anything else but what they are doing, and then the nations are angry at them for their stupid and evil deeds. To kill these men is the same as spoiling children and then whipping them.

To have no oppressions of the nations and no unnecessary wars, and for no one to be provoked at those who seem to be the authors of them and to kill them, very little, it would seem, would suffice, namely, that men should merely understand things as they are, and should call them by their real names, should know that the army is an instrument of murder, and that the levy and maintenance of the army — precisely what the kings, emperors, and presidents are concerned about with so much self-assurance — is a preparation for murder.

If only every king, emperor, and president understood that his duty of managing the army is neither honourable nor important, as he is made to believe by his flatterers, but a bad and disgraceful work of preparing for murder; and if every private person understood that the payment of taxes, with which soldiers are hired and armed, and much more enlistment in the army, are not indifferent acts, but bad, disgraceful acts, not only an abetment of,

but even a participation in murder, — then the provoking power of the emperors, presidents, and kings, for which they are now killed, would die of its own accord.

So we must not kill an Alexander, a Carnot, a Humbert, and others, but must explain to them that they themselves are murderers, and, above all, we must not permit them to kill people, we must refuse to kill by their command.

If men are not yet doing so, this is due only to the hypnosis in which the governments carefully maintain them from a feeling of self-preservation. And so it is not with murders that we can contribute to this, that men may stop killing kings and one another, — the murders, on the contrary, intensify the hypnosis, — but with an awakening from the hypnosis.

That is precisely what I am attempting to bring about with this note.

August 8, 1900.

WHERE IS THE WAY OUT?

1900

WHERE IS THE WAY OUT?

ON THE CONDITION OF THE LABOURING CLASSES

1

A BOY is born in the country; he grows up and works with his father, his grandfather, his mother.

And the boy sees that from the field which he ploughed, harrowed, and seeded with his father, which his mother and the girl cut with the sickle and harvested, the sheaves which he himself pulled down from the rick, to help his mother, — the boy sees that his father does not take the first ricks to his own house, but, past the garden, to the threshing-floor of the landed proprietor. Driving with the squeaky wagon, which he and his father had themselves fastened with ropes, past the manor, the boy sees on the balcony a dressed-up lady sitting near a shining samovár at a table, which is covered with dishes, pastry, and sweets, and on the other side of the road, in a cleared space, the proprietor's two boys, in embroidered shirts and shining boots, playing ball.

One boy throws the ball over the wagon.

"Pick it up, boy!" he shouts.

"Pick it up, Váska!" Váska's father, walking beside the wagon, with the reins in his hand, and taking off his hat, cries out to his son.

"What is this?" thinks the boy. "I am worn out from work, and they play, and I am to pick up their ball."

But he picks up the ball, and the young lord, without looking at the boy, takes the ball with his white hand out of the sunburnt black hand of the boy, and goes back to his game.

The father has walked on with the wagon. The boy catches up with him on a run, shuffling his tattered low boots in the dust of the road, and they drive into the manorial threshing-floor, which is full of wagons with sheaves. The busy steward, in linen frock coat, which is wet from perspiration in the back, and with a rod in his hand, meets the boy's father, whom he scolds for not having driven to the right spot. His father makes excuses, walks as though fatigued, jerks the tired horse by the rein, and drives the wagon on the other side.

The boy goes up to his father and asks:

"Father, why do we take our rye to him? *We* harvested it?"

"Because the land is theirs," the father answers, angrily.

"Who gave them the land?"

"Ask the steward. He will show you who. Do you see their rod?"

"Where will they put all this corn?"

"They will thresh it, and then they will sell it."

"And what will they do with the money?"

"They will buy those cakes that you saw on the table as we drove by."

The boy grows silent and falls to musing. But he has no time for that. They are shouting to his father to move the wagon closer to the barn. The father moves the wagon, climbs upon it, and, having with difficulty loosened the ropes, straining his rupture more and more, throws the sheaves into the mow, while the boy holds the old mare, which he has for two years been driving to pasture, keeping the flies away from her, as his father

commands him to do. He thinks and thinks, and cannot understand why the land does not belong to those who work upon it, but to those sons of the lord, who in embroidered shirts play ball and drink tea and eat cakes.

The boy continues to think about it at work, and when he goes to bed, and when he pastures the horses, — and can find no answer for it. All say that it must be so, and all live in that manner.

And the boy grows up, and he is married off, and children are born to him, and his children ask the same question of him, and he answers them in the same way that his father answered him. And, living like him in want, he works submissively for other, idle people.

And thus he lives, and thus live all around him. Wherever he may go or travel, — so a pilgrim tells him, — it is the same. Everywhere peasants work above their strength for other, idle people, by overwork get ruptures, asthma, consumption, take to drinking from grief, and die before their time; the women exhaust their last strength in cooking, attending to the cattle, washing for the peasants, and making their clothes, and also age before their time, and waste away from overwork and untimely labour.

And everywhere those they work for provide themselves with buggies, carriages, trotters, horses, build arbours, arrange games, and from Easter to Easter, from morning until evening, dress themselves up as for a holiday, play and eat and drink every day as even on the greatest holiday is not the case with him who works for them.

2

Why is that so?

The first answer which presents itself to the labouring farmer is this, that it is so, because the land was taken from him and was given to those who do not work it. He and his family have to eat, but the working peasant

has either no land at all, or so little of it that it will not support his family. Thus he must starve or else take the land which is not far from the farms, but which does not belong to those who work; he has to take the land, agreeing to those conditions which are offered to him.

At first it seems to be so, but that is not all of it: there are peasants who have enough land, and who may be able to support themselves by it.

But it turns out that even such peasants, all of them or a part, again sell themselves into slavery. Why is that so? Because the peasants have to buy for money ploughshares, scythes, horseshoes, materials for buildings, kerosene, tea, sugar, liquor, ropes, salt, matches, cottons, tobacco; but the money which a peasant earns by the sale of his products is all the time taken away from him in the form of direct and indirect imposts, and the price of those articles which he needs is raised. Thus the majority of the peasants are unable to provide themselves with the necessary money except by selling themselves into slavery to those who have the money.

This the peasants and their wives and daughters do. Some sell themselves in their neighbourhood; others sell themselves a distance away, in the capitals, — hiring themselves out as lackeys, coachmen, nurses, wet-nurses, chambermaids, bath servants, waiters, and, above all, as factory hands, going to the cities by whole families.

Having sold themselves into these occupations in the cities, the country people become unaccustomed to farm labour and simplicity of life, and get used to city food, dress, beverages, and through these habits still more confirm their slavery.

Thus it is not merely the lack of land that causes the labouring man to be in the slavery of the rich; the cause of it is also to be found in the taxes, the raised price of commodities, and the luxurious city habits, which the

country workers get used to, when they go away from their villages.

The slavery began with the land, with the land being taken away from the workers, but this slavery has been strengthened and confirmed by this, that the country people have become unaccustomed to labour and have become used to city luxury, which cannot be satisfied in any other way than by selling themselves into slavery to those who have money; and this slavery is growing and becoming more and more confirmed.

In the country people live on semi-starvation rations, in constant labour and want, enslaved to the landowners; in the cities, in the factories and plants, the labourers live in slavery to the manufacturers, for generations physically and morally corrupted by the monotonous, tedious, unhealthy work, which is not proper for a man. And with the years the situation of either class of men is getting worse and worse. In the country the people are getting poorer and poorer, because an ever growing number of people are going to the factories. In the cities the people are not getting poorer, but seemingly richer, but at the same time more and more incontinent, and more and more unable to do any other work than the kind they are used to, and so they are more and more in the power of the manufacturers.

Thus the power of the landowners and the manufacturers, of the rich in general, is getting stronger and stronger, while the condition of the labourers is getting worse and worse. What, then, is the way out of this situation? Is there one?

3

It would seem that the liberation from the slavery of the land is very easy. For this liberation all that is needed is to recognize what is self-understood, and what people would never have doubted, if they were not de-

ceived, namely, that every man born has the right to gain his sustenance from the land, just as every man has a right to the air and the sun, and that, therefore, no one who does not work the land has the right to regard the land as his own and to keep others from working it.

But the government will never permit this liberation from the slavery of the land to take place, because the majority of the men who constitute the government own lands, and upon this ownership all their existence is based.

They know this, and so they try with all their forces to hold on to this right, and defend this right.

About thirty years ago Henry George proposed, not only a rational, but a very practicable project for the emancipation of the land from ownership. But neither in America nor in England (in France they do not even speak of it) was this project accepted, and they tried in every way to overthrow it; but, as it is impossible to overthrow it, they passed it in silence.

If this project has not been accepted in America and in England, there is still less hope that this project will be accepted in monarchical countries, such as Germany, Austria, or Russia.

In Russia vast expanses of territory have been seized by private individuals and by the Tsar and the imperial family, and so there is no hope that these men, feeling themselves as helpless without the right to the land as the birdlings feel without their nest, will give up their right and will refrain from fighting for this right with all their strength. And so, as long as the power shall be on the side of the government, which is composed of landowners, there will be no emancipation from the ownership of the land.

Just as little, and even less, will there be a liberation from the taxes. The whole government, from the head of the state, the Tsar, down to the last policeman, lives

by the taxes. And so the abolition of the taxes by the government is as unthinkable as that a man should take from himself his only means of existence.

It is true, some governments seem to be trying to relieve their people from the burden of the taxes by transferring them to the income, by increasing the taxes in accordance with the income. But such a transference of the taxes from a direct levy to the income cannot deceive the masses, because the rich, that is, the merchants, landowners, and capitalists will, in proportion with the increase of the taxes, increase the price of commodities which are needed by the labourers and the price of the land, and will lower the wages of labour. Thus the whole burden of the taxes will again be borne by the labourers.

For the labourers to be freed from the slavery which is due to this, that the implements of production are owned by the capitalists, the learned have proposed a whole series of measures, in consequence of which, according to their assumption, the wages of the labourers are to increase all the time, while the hours of labour must diminish, and finally all the implements of labour have to pass from the possession of the masters into the hands of the labourers, so that the labourers, possessing all the factories and plants, will not be compelled to give up a part of their labours to the capitalists, but will have for their labours the necessary commodities. This method has been advocated in Europe, in England, France, and Germany, for more than thirty years, but so far there has not only been no realization of this method, but not even any approach to it.

There exist labour unions, strikes are inaugurated, by means of which the labourers demand fewer working hours and greater pay; but since the governments, who are united with the capitalists, do not allow, and never will allow, the implements of production to be taken

away from the capitalists, the essence of the matter remains the same.

Receiving better pay and doing less work, the labourers increase their needs and so remain in the same slavery to the capitalists.

Thus the slavery in which the working people are can obviously not be destroyed so long as the governments, in the first place, will secure the ownership of land to the non-working landowners; in the second, will collect direct and indirect taxes; in the third, will defend the property of the capitalists.

4

The slavery of the working people is due to this, that there are governments. But if the slavery of the labourers is due to the government, the emancipation is naturally conditioned by the abolition of the existing governments and the establishment of new governments, — such as will make possible the liberation of the land from ownership, the abolition of taxes, and the transference of the capital and the factories into the power and control of the working people.

There are men who recognize this issue as possible, and who are preparing themselves for it. But fortunately (since such an action, which is always connected with violence and murder, is immoral and ruinous for the cause itself, as has frequently been repeated in history) such actions are impossible in our time.

The time has long ago passed, when the governments naïvely believed in their beneficent destiny for humanity and did not take any measures for securing themselves against rebellions (besides, there were no railways and no telegraphs then), and they were easily overthrown, as was the case in England in 1740, in France during the great Revolution and later, and in Germany in 1848. Since then there has been but one revolution, in 1871, and that

one happened under exceptional conditions. In our day revolutions and the overthrow of governments are simply impossible. They are impossible, because in our time the governments, knowing their uselessness and harmfulness, and that in our time no one believes in their sanctity, are guided by nothing but a feeling of self-preservation, and, making use of all the means at their command, are constantly on the lookout for everything which may not only impair their power, but even shake it.

Every government has in our time an army of officials, which is connected by means of railways, telegraphs, telephones; it has fortresses and prisons with all the most modern appliances, — photography, anthropometric measurements, mines, cannon, guns, all the most perfect instruments of violence that can be had, — and the moment something new appears, it is at once applied to purposes of self-preservation. There is the organization of espionage, a venal clergy, venal scholars and artists, and a venal press. Above all else, every government has a body of officers, who are corrupted by patriotism, bribery, and hypnotism, and millions of physically sound and morally undeveloped children of twenty-one years of age, — the soldiers, or a rabble of immoral hirelings, who are stultified by discipline and are ready for any crime which they are ordered by their superiors to commit.

And so it is impossible in our time by force to destroy the government, which is in possession of such means, and which is all the time on guard. No government will allow this to be done to itself. And so long as there shall be a government, it will maintain the ownership of the land, the collection of the taxes, and the possession of capital, because the larger landowners and the officials, who receive their salaries from the taxes, and the capitalists form parts of the government. Every attempt of the labourers to get possession of the land, which is in the hands of private owners, will always end the way it has

always ended, — in that the soldiers will come, will beat and drive away those who want to seize the land, and will give it back to the owner. In the same way will end every attempt at not paying the taxes demanded, — the soldiers will come, will take away as much as the taxes amount to, and will beat him who refuses to pay what is demanded of him. The same will happen to those who will try, not so much to seize the implements of production, the factory, but simply to institute a strike, to keep other workmen from lowering the wages for work. The soldiers will come and will disperse the participants, as has constantly happened in every place, in Europe and in Russia. So long as the soldiers are in the hands of the government, which lives on taxes and is connected with the owners of land and of capital, a revolution is impossible. And so long as the soldiers are in the hands of the government, the structure of life will be such as those who have the soldiers in their hands will want it to be.

5

And so there naturally arises the question: Who are these soldiers?

These soldiers are the same people whose land has been taken away, from whom the taxes are being collected, and who are in slavery to the capitalists.

Why do these soldiers act against themselves?

They do so because they cannot do otherwise. They cannot do otherwise, because by a long, complex past — of their education, of their religious instruction, of hypnotization — they have been brought to such a state that they cannot reflect, and are able only to obey. The government, having in its hands the money, which it has taken from the masses, with this money bribes all kinds of chiefs, who have to enlist soldiers, and then military chiefs, who have to teach, that is, deprive the men of

their human consciousness; but above all, the government with this money bribes the teachers and the clergy, who have to use every effort for impressing adults and children with the idea that militarism, that is, the preparation for murder, is not only useful for men, but also good and pleasing to God. And year after year, though they see that they and their like are enslaving the masses to the rich and the government, they submissively enter the army, and, having entered, without a murmur do everything prescribed to them, though that not only may be the obvious detriment of their brothers, but may even be the killing of their own parents.

The bribed officials, military teachers, and the clergy prepare the soldiers, by stupefying them.

The soldiers, at the command of their superiors and with threats to deprive of liberty, to inflict wounds and death, take the income from the land, the taxes, and the income from the factories, from commerce, for the benefit of the ruling classes. But the ruling classes use a part of this money for bribing the chiefs, the military teachers, and the clergy.

6

Thus the circle is closed, and there does not seem to be any way out.

The issue suggested by the revolutionists, which consists in using force in the struggle with force, is obviously impossible. The governments, who are already in possession of a disciplined force, will never permit the formation of another disciplined force. All the attempts of the past century have shown how vain such attempts are. Nor is there a way out, as the socialists believe, by means of forming a great economic force which would be able to fight successfully against the consolidated and ever more consolidating force of the capitalists. Never will the labour unions, who may be in possession of a few miser-

able millions, be able to fight against the economic power of the multi-millionaires, who are always supported by the military force. Just as little is there a way out, as is proposed by other socialists, by getting possession of the majority of the parliament. Such a majority in the parliament will not attain anything, so long as the army shall be in the hands of the governments. The moment the decrees of the parliament shall be opposed to the interests of the ruling classes, the government will close and disperse such a parliament, as has been so frequently done and as will be done so long as the army is in the hands of the government. The introduction of socialistic principles into the army will not accomplish anything. The hypnotism of the army is so artfully applied that the most free-thinking and rational person will, so long as he is in the army, always do what is demanded of him. Thus there is no way out by means of revolution or in socialism.

If there is a way out, it is the one which has not been used yet and which alone incontestably destroys the whole consolidated, artful, and long-established governmental machine for the enslavement of the masses. This way out consists in refusing to enter into the army, before one is subjected to the stupefying and corrupting influence of discipline.

This way out is the only one which is possible and which at the same time is inevitably obligatory for every individual person. It is the only possible one, because the existing violence is based on three actions of the government, — on the robbery of the masses, on the distribution of money thus taken to those who commit the robbery, and on the drafting of the masses into the army.

A private individual cannot keep the government from practising robbery on the masses by means of the drafted army, nor can it keep it from distributing the money collected from the masses to those who are needed by the

government for the drafting of the army and their stultification; but he can keep the masses from entering into the army, by not joining it himself and by explaining to others the essence of the deception to which they fall a prey when they enter into the army.

Not only *can* every man do so, — every private individual *must* do so. Every private individual must do so, because the entrance into military service is a renunciation of every religion, no matter which he may profess (every one of them prohibits murder), and a renunciation of human dignity, — a voluntary entrance into slavery having for its purpose nothing but murder.

In this is the only possible, necessary, and inevitable way out from that enslavement in which the ruling classes keep the working people.

The way out does not consist in destroying violence by means of violence, not in seizing the implements of production or in fighting the governments in the parliaments, but in every man's recognition of the truth for himself, in practising it, and in acting in accordance with it. But the truth that a man must not kill his neighbour has been so universally cognized by humanity that it is known to everybody.

Let only men apply their forces, not to external phenomena, but to the causes of the phenomena, to their own lives, and like wax before the fire will all that power of violence and evil melt, which now holds and torments people.

October, 1900.

NEED IT BE SO?

1900

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1

Amidst fields there stands, surrounded by a wall, a foundry, with incessantly smoking chimneys, clattering chains, furnaces, a railway siding, and scattered little houses of the managers and labourers. In this foundry and in the mines belonging to it the working people swarm like ants; some of them, in passages two hundred feet underground, which are dark, narrow, close, damp, and constantly threaten with death, are at work from morning until night, or from night until morning, mining the ore; others in the darkness, bending over, take this ore or clay to the shaft and take back empty cars, and again fill them, and so work for twelve or fourteen hours a day throughout the week.

Thus they work in the mines. In the foundry itself, some work at the furnace in an oppressive heat, others work at the trough of the melted ore and slag; others again, the engineers, stokers, smiths, brickmakers, carpenters, are at work in the shops, also from twelve to fourteen hours a day throughout the week.

On Sunday all these men receive their wages, wash themselves, or sometimes even do not wash themselves, go to the inns and saloons which on all sides surround the foundry, and which entice the working people, and early on Monday morning they go back to their work.

Near this same foundry peasants plough somebody else's field with lean, worn-out horses. These peasants got up with the dawn, if they have not passed the night in the pasture, that is, near a swamp, the only place where they can feed their horses; they get up with the dawn, come home, harness the horses, and, taking with them a slice of bread, go out to plough somebody else's field.

Other peasants are sitting not far away from the foundry, on the highway, and, having made themselves a shield from matting, are breaking rock for the highway. The legs of these men are bruised, their hands are all calluses, their whole bodies are dirty, and not only their faces, hair, and beards, but even their lungs are permeated with lime dust.

Taking a small unbroken stone from a heap, these men put it between the soles of their feet, which are covered with bast shoes and wrapped in rags, and strike this stone with a heavy mallet, until the stone breaks: when the stone has broken, they take the smaller parts and strike them until these are broken fine; and again they take whole stones, and again. — And thus these men work from early summer dawn until night, — fifteen, sixteen hours, resting only for two hours after dinner, and twice, at breakfast and at noon, strengthening themselves with bread and water.

And thus do these men live in the mines and in the foundry, and the ploughmen, and the stone-breakers, from early youth until old age; and in similar work above their strength live their wives and their mothers, suffering from diseases of the womb; and thus live their fathers and their children, poorly fed, poorly dressed, doing work which is above their strength and ruins their health, from morning until evening, from childhood until old age.

And past the foundry, past the stone-breakers, past the

ploughing peasants, meeting and overtaking ragged men and women with their wallets, who are wandering from place to place and begging in the name of Christ, there races a carriage, with tinkling bells, drawn by four matched chestnut horses of good height, the worst of which is worth the whole farm of any of the peasants who are admiring the four-in-hand. In the carriage are seated two ladies, displaying brightly coloured parasols, ribbons, and hat feathers, each of which costs more than the horse with which a peasant ploughs his field; in the front seat sits an officer, shining in the sun with lace and buttons, and dressed in a freshly laundered blouse; on the box sits a ponderous coachman, in blue silk shirt-sleeves and velvet sleeveless coat. He came very near crushing some women pilgrims, and almost knocked a peasant, who, dressed in a dirty, ore-soiled shirt, was jolting in his empty cart, into the ditch.

"You see this?" says the coachman, showing the whip to the peasant, who was not quick enough in turning aside, and the peasant with one hand pulls the rein and with the other timidly pulls his cap off his lousy head.

Back of the carriage, glinting in the sun with the nickle-plated parts of their machines, noiselessly race two men and one woman on bicycles, and they laugh merrily, as they overtake and frighten the wandering women, who make the sign of the cross.

On the side-path of the highway pass two riders, — a man on an English cob, and a lady on an ambler. To say nothing of the cost of the horses and the saddles, the one black hat with the lilac veil cost two months' work of the stone-breakers, and for the fashionable English whip as much was paid as in a week will be earned by that young lad, who is happy that he has hired out to work underground in the mine, and who is getting out of the way, while admiring the sleek forms of the horses and riders, and the fat, imported, immense dog in an expen-

sive collar, which is running with protruding tongue back of them.

Not far from this company there travel in a cart a dressed-up, smiling maid, with curls, wearing a white apron, and a fat, ruddy man, with well-groomed side-whiskers, who is whispering something to the maid. In the cart may be seen a samovár, bundles in napkins, and an ice-cream freezer.

These are the servants of the people who are travelling in the carriage, on horseback, and on bicycles. The present day is nothing out of the ordinary. Thus they live the whole summer, going out for pleasure almost every day, and at times, as now, taking with them tea, beverages, and sweets, in order to eat and drink, not in the same, but in some new place.

These people are three families which are passing the summer in the country. One is the family of a proprietor, the owner of two thousand desyatínas of land, another that of an official, who receives a salary of three thousand roubles, and the third — the wealthiest family — the children of a manufacturer.

All these people are not in the least surprised or touched by the sight of all this poverty and hard labour by which they are surrounded. They think that all this must be so. They are interested in something quite different.

"No, that is impossible," says the lady on horseback, looking back at the dog, "I cannot see that!" and she stops the carriage. All talk together in French and laugh, and they put the dog into the carriage and proceed, covering the stone-breakers and the itinerants with clouds of lime dust.

And the carriage, the riders, the bicyclists, have flashed by like beings from another world; and the people in the foundry, the stone-breakers, the ploughmen continue their hard, monotonous work for somebody else, which will end with their lives.

"Some people have a fine time!" they think, as they watch the travellers off. And their painful existence appears still more painful to them.

2

What is this? Have these labouring people done something very criminal that they are punished thus? Or is this the lot of all men? And have those who passed by in the carriages and on the bicycles done something particularly useful and important that they are thus rewarded? Not in the least! On the contrary, those who are working with such tension are for the most part moral, continent, modest, industrious people; while those who passed by are for the most part corrupted, lustful, impudent, idle people. This is so, because such a structure of life is considered natural and regular in the world of men who assert that they are professing Christ's law of love of our neighbour, or that they are people of culture, that is, perfected people.

Such a structure exists, not only in that corner of Túla County, which presents itself vividly to me, because I frequently see it, but everywhere, not only in Russia, — from St. Petersburg to Batum, — but also in France, — from Paris to Auvergne, — and in Italy, — from Rome to Palermo, — and in Germany, in Spain, in America, in Australia, and even in India and in China. Everywhere two or three people in a thousand live in such a way that, without doing anything for themselves, they in one day consume in food and drink as much as would support hundreds of people for a year; they wear clothes which cost thousands; live in palaces, where thousands of labouring people could find room; spend on their whims thousands of roubles and millions of work-days; others again, getting neither enough sleep nor enough food, work

above their strength, ruining their bodily and their spiritual health for these few elect.

For one class of women, when they are about to bear children, they send for a midwife, a doctor, sometimes for two doctors for one lying-in woman, and their layettes contain a hundred baby-shirts and swaddling-clothes with silk ribbons, and they get ready little wagons swinging on springs; the other class of women, the vast majority, bear children in any chance place and in any chance manner, without aid, swaddle them in rags, put them into bast cradles on straw, and are glad when they die.

The children of one class, while the mother is lying in bed for nine days, are taken care of by the midwife, the nurse, the wet-nurse; the children of the other class are not taken care of, because there is no one to do so, and the mother herself gets up immediately after childbirth, makes the fires in the oven, milks the cow, and sometimes washes the clothes for herself, her husband, and her children. One class of children grows up among toys, amusements, and instructions; the other children at first crawl with their bared bellies over thresholds, become maimed, are eaten up by pigs, and at five years of age begin to work above their strength. The first are taught all the scientific wisdom which is adapted to their age; the others learn vulgar curses and the most savage of superstitions. The first fall in love, carry on love-affairs, and then marry, after they have experienced all the pleasures of love; the others are married off to those whom the parents choose, between the ages of sixteen and twenty years, for the purpose of receiving additional aid. The first eat and drink the best and the most expensive things in the world, feeding their dogs on white bread and beef; the second eat nothing but bread and kvas, nor do they get enough bread, and what they get is stale, so that they may not eat too much of it. The first change their fine underwear every day, so as not to get soiled; the

second, who are constantly doing work for others, change their coarse, ragged, lousy underwear once in two weeks, or do not change it at all, but wear it until it falls to pieces. The first sleep between clean sheets, on feather beds; the second sleep on the ground, covering themselves with their tattered caftans.

The first drive out with well-fed horses, for no work, but simply for pleasure; the second work hard with ill-fed horses, and walk, if they have any business to attend to. The first wonder what to do, in order to occupy their leisure time; the second find no time to clean themselves, to wash, to take a rest, to say a word, to visit their relatives. The first read four languages and every day amuse themselves with the greatest variety of things; the second do not know how to read at all and know no other amusement than drunkenness. The first know everything and believe in nothing; the second know nothing and believe any nonsense that they are told. When the first get sick, they travel from place to place in search of the best curative air, to say nothing of all kinds of waters, every kind of attention, and every kind of cleanliness and medicine; the second lie down on the oven in a smoky hut, and with unwashed sores, and with the absence of any food but stale bread, and of all air but such as is infected by ten members of the family, and by the calves and sheep, rot alive and die before their time.

Must it be so?

If there is a higher reason and a love which guide the world, if there is a God, He cannot have wished to see such division among men, when one class of them do not know what to do with the surplus of their wealth and senselessly squander the fruit of the labours of other men, and the others grow sick and die before their time, or live an agonizing life, working above their strength.

If there is a God, this cannot and must not be. But if there is no God, such a structure of life, in which the

majority of men must waste their lives, so that a small number of men may enjoy an abundance, which only corrupts this minority and weighs heavily upon it, is, from the simplest human point of view, insipid, because it is disadvantageous for all men.

3

Why, then, do men live thus?

It is natural for the rich, who are used to their wealth and who do not see clearly that wealth does not give happiness, to try to maintain their position. But why does the vast majority, in whose hands is every power, assume that there is happiness in wealth, and continue to live in want and submit to the minority?

Indeed, why do all those men who are strong in muscles and in artisanship and in the habit of work — the vast majority of men — submit, give in to a handful of feeble people, pampered old men and mainly women, who for the most part are not fit for anything?

Take a walk before the holidays or during bargain weeks along the business streets, say through the Moscow Passages. Ten or twelve Passages, consisting of solid rows of magnificent shops with immense plate-glass windows, are all filled with all kinds of expensive wares, — exclusively feminine ones, — stuffs, dresses, laces, gems, foot-gear, house adornments, furs, and so forth. All these things cost millions and millions, all these articles have been manufactured in establishments by working people who frequently ruin their lives over this work, and all these articles are of no use, not only to the working people, but even to the wealthy men, — they are all amusements and adornments of women. At the entrances porters in galloons stand on both sides, and coachmen in expensive garments sit on the boxes of

expensive carriages, which are drawn by trotters that cost into the thousands. Again millions of working days have been wasted on the production of all the luxury of the harnesses: old and young working people, men and women, have devoted all their lives to the production of all these articles. And all these articles are in the power and in the hands of a few hundred women, who in expensive furs and hats of the latest fashion saunter through these shops and purchase all these articles, which are manufactured for them.

A few hundreds of women arbitrarily dispose of the labour of millions of working people, who work to support themselves and their families. On the whims of these women depend the fate, the lives of millions of people.

How did this happen?

Why do all these millions of strong people, who have manufactured these articles, submit to these women?

Now a lady in a velvet fur coat and a hat of the very latest fashion drives up with a span of trotters. Everything upon her is new and most expensive. A porter hurries to throw back the boot of her sleigh, and respectfully helps her out, by supporting her under her elbow. She walks down the Passage as though through her kingdom, enters one of the shops, and buys five thousand roubles' worth of material for her drawing-room, and, having given the order to send it up to her house, goes elsewhere. She is an evil, stupid, and not at all beautiful woman, who does not bear any children and has never done anything in her life for any one else. Why, then, do the porter, and the coachman, and the clerks fawn so servilely before her? And why has all that over which thousands of workmen have laboured become her property? Because she has money, and the porter, the coachman, the clerks, and the workmen in the factory need money, with which to support their families. The money is most convenient for them, and frequently can be gained

only by serving as a coachman, porter, clerk, workman in a factory.

And why has this woman money? She has money because people who have been driven off the land and have forgotten how to do any other work are living in her husband's factory, while her husband, giving the workmen as much as they must necessarily have for their support, takes all the profit from the factory, to the amount of several hundred thousands, for himself, and, not knowing what to do with the money, is glad to give it to his wife, for her to spend it on anything she may wish.

And here is another lady, in a still more luxurious carriage and garments, who is buying up all kinds of expensive and useless things in all kinds of shops. Where does she get the money from? She is the mistress of a wealthy landowner of twenty thousand desyatínas, which were given to his ancestor by a harlot queen for his debauchery with that old queen. This landowner owns all the land around a colony of peasants, and lets this land to the peasants at seventeen roubles per desyatína. The peasants pay this money, because without the land they would starve. And this money is now in the hands of the mistress, and with this money she buys things which have been made by other peasants, who have been driven off the land.

Here again a third rich woman, with her fiancé and mother, is walking down the Passage. This woman is about to marry, and she is buying bronzes and expensive dishes. She has money given her by her father, a distinguished official, who is receiving a salary of twelve thousand roubles. He gave his daughter a dowry of seven thousand roubles. This money was collected from import revenues and taxes, again from the peasants. These same taxes compelled the porter, who opens the door (he is a Kalúga peasant, — his wife and children are left at home), and the coachman, who brought them up (he is a Túla

peasant), and hundreds, and thousands, and millions of men, who work out in houses or in factories, — to leave their homes and to work on articles which are consumed by the ladies, who receive the money, which by the manufacturers, landowners, officials is collected from the profit in the factories, or from the land, or from the taxes.

Thus millions of workmen have submitted to these women, because one man has taken possession of a factory, in which people work, another has taken possession of the land, while a third has seized the taxes, which are collected from the labouring classes. It is this that produced that which I saw about the foundry.

The peasants ploughed somebody else's field, because they have not enough land, and he who owns the land permits them to use his land only on condition that they work for him. The stone-breakers broke rock, because only by means of this work were they able to pay the taxes demanded of them. In the foundry and in the mines the people worked, because the earth from which the ore is extracted and the smelter where it is smelted do not belong to them.

All these working people do hard work, not for themselves, because the rich have taken possession of the land, collect taxes, and own the plants.

4

Why does he who does not work, and not he who works, own the land? Why do a small number of men make use of the taxes which are collected from all men, and not those who pay them? Why are the factories owned, not by those who built them and work in them, but by a small number of men who did not build them and do not work in them?

To the question as to why non-workers have seized the land of the workers the customary answer is, that that is

so, because the land was given them for their deserts or bought with money earned. To the question as to why one set of men, a small number of men, the non-working managers and their helpers, collect for themselves the greater share of the wealth of all the working people, and use it at will, the customary answer is this, that the men who use the money which is collected from the masses manage the others and defend them and preserve order and decency among them. And to the question as to why rich people of leisure own the products and implements of the labour of the working people, the answer is that these productions and implements of labour were earned by them or by their ancestors.

And all these men — the landowners, the servants of the government, the merchants, the manufacturers — are sincerely convinced that their possession is quite just, — that they have the right to such a possession.

However, neither the possession of the land, nor the collection of the taxes and use of them, nor the possession of the products and implements of labour by people of leisure, has any justification. The possession of land by those who do not work upon it has no justification, because the land, like the water, the air, the sunbeams, forms an indispensable condition of the life of every man and so cannot be the exclusive possession of one person. If the land, and not the water, the air, and the sunbeams, has become an object of possession, this is not due to the fact that the land is not just as indispensable and appropriable a condition for the existence of any man, but only because it has been impossible to deprive people of water, air, and sun, while it has been possible to deprive them of the land.

The ownership of land, having originated in violence (through conquest people appropriated the land, and then gave it away and sold it), has remained, in spite of every effort at turning it into a right, nothing but an act of

violence of the strong and armed against the weak and unarmed.

Let a man, who is working the land, violate this imaginary right, let him plough the land which is considered to be the property of another, and there will soon appear that on which this supposed right is based, — at first in the form of policemen, and then in the form of a military force, — of soldiers, — who will stab and shoot those who are trying to make use of their real right to support themselves by means of work on the land. Thus, what is called the right to the ownership of land is nothing but violence exerted against all those who may have need of this land. The right to the land is like the right to a road which robbers have seized and over which they do not permit people to travel without a ransom.

A still lesser semblance of justification can be found for the right of the government to a forcible levy of the taxes. It is asserted that the taxes are used for the defence of the government against foreign enemies, for the establishment and support of domestic order, and for the execution of necessary public works.

But, in the first place, foreign enemies have long ago ceased to exist, even according to the declarations of the governments themselves: they all assure their nations that they wish for nothing but peace. The Emperor of Germany wants peace, the French republic wants peace, England wants peace, and Russia wants the same. Still more urgently do the Transvaalers and the Chinese want peace. So against whom are we to defend ourselves?

In the second place, in order to give up the money for the establishment of domestic order and public works, it is necessary to be sure that the men who establish order will do so, and, besides, that this order will be good and that the public works to be executed will actually be needed by society. But if, as is always and everywhere repeated, those who pay the taxes are not convinced of

the fitness, or even of the honesty of those who establish order, and, besides, consider the order itself to be bad and the public works about to be executed not such as the taxpayers need, it is evident that there is no right to collect taxes, but only violence.

I remember the utterance of a Russian peasant, who was religious and, therefore, truly liberal. Like Thoreau, he did not consider it just to pay taxes for things which his conscience did not approve of, and when he was asked to pay his share of the taxes, he asked what the taxes which he would pay would be used for, saying, "If the taxes shall be used for a good thing, I will at once give you not only what you demand, but even more; but if they shall be used for something bad, I cannot and will not give a kopek of my own free will."

Of course, they lost no time with him, but broke down his closed gate, carried off his cow, and sold it for the taxes. Thus in reality there is but one true and real cause of taxes, — the power which collects them, — the possibility of robbing those who do not give the taxes willingly, and even of beating them for a refusal, of putting them in prison, and of punishing them — as is actually done.

The fact that in England, in France, in America, and in general in constitutional governments, the taxes are determined by the parliament, that is, by the supposed representatives of the people gathered together, does not change the matter, because the elections are so arranged that the members of the parliament do not represent the people, but are politicians, and if they were not to start with, they become such as soon as they get into parliament, and are busy with their personal ambition and the interests of the warring parties.

Just as groundless are the justifications of the supposed right of ownership, which the leisure people claim in respect to the products of the labour of other people.

This right of ownership, which is even called a sacred right, is generally justified on the ground that property is the result of continence and of an industrious activity, which is useful to men. But we need only analyze the origin of great fortunes, to be convinced of the contrary.

Fortunes always originate, either in violence, — this is most common, — or in nastiness, or in rascality on a large scale, or in chronic cheating, like what is practised by merchants. The more a man is moral, the more certain he is to be deprived of the fortune which he has, and the more he is immoral, the more certain he is to gain and retain a fortune. Popular wisdom says that one cannot earn stone palaces with righteous labour, — that labour gives one stooping shoulders, and not wealth. Thus it was, indeed, of old, and it is still more true of the present, when the distribution of wealth has long ago taken place in a most irregular manner. Though we may admit that in primitive society a more abstemious and industrious man will gain more than an incontinent man, who does not work much, nothing of the kind is true for our present society. No matter how abstemious and industrious a man, a labourer, may be, who is working on somebody else's land, who purchases at a price established for him such articles as he may need, and who works with other people's implements of labour, he will never acquire any wealth. But the most incontinent and idle of men, — as we see in the case of thousands of individuals, — who stands in with the government or with rich men, who busies himself with usury, with a manufactory, a house of prostitution, a bank, the sale of liquor, will easily acquire a fortune.

The laws which are supposed to protect property are laws which only protect property which has been stolen, which is already in the hands of the rich, and they not only fail to protect the labourers, who have no prop-

erty, except their labour, but even aid in robbing them of this labour.

We see an endless number of administrators, — the Tsar, his brothers, uncles, ministers, judges, the clergy, — who receive enormous salaries, collected from the people, and who do not even attend to those easy duties which they have undertaken to attend to for this remuneration. And so, it would seem, these people steal the salary collected from the masses, that is, the property of the masses, but it does not even occur to any one to condemn them.

But let a labourer make use of even a part of the money received by these people, or of the objects bought with this money, and it will be said that he has violated the sacred ownership, and for this sum which he has made use of he is sentenced, imprisoned, and deported.

A manufacturer, who is a millionaire, promises to pay the labouring man a wage which for him, the manufacturer, represents one ten-millionth part of his fortune, that is, almost nothing; but the labourer puts himself under obligation, in consequence of his want, in the course of the year to furnish, with the exception of the holidays, his daily work of twelve hours, which is dangerous and harmful for his health, that is, he puts himself under obligation to give the maufacturer the greater part of his life, perhaps his whole life; and the government protects alike either kind of ownership.

With this the manufacturer, as is well known, year in and year out robs the labourer of the greater share of his earnings, and appropriates it to himself. It would seem to be obvious that the manufacturer robs the labourer of the greater half of his property, and so ought to be made responsible for it; but the government considers the manufacturer's property thus gained to be sacred, and punishes the labourer who under his coat carries off two

pounds of copper, which forms one-billionth part of the manufacturer's property.

Let the labourer try, as happens during the anti-Jewish riots, to take away from the rich ever so small a part of what was lawfully taken from the labourers: let a starving man, as lately occurred in Milan, appropriate a loaf, which, taking advantage of the famine, the rich are selling at a high price to the labourers; or let a labourer by means of a strike endeavour to get back a small part of what was taken from him, — he violates the sacred right of property, and the government immediately comes with its army to the succour of the landowner, the manufacturer, the merchant, against the labourer. Thus the right on which the rich base their ownership of the land, the right to levy taxes and possess the products of labour of other people, has nothing in common with justice, and all of it is based on nothing but violence, which is produced by the army.

5

Let a farmer try to plough the field which he needs for his support; let him endeavour to refuse to pay the taxes, — either direct or indirect; let him try to take provisions of corn which he has not earned, or implements of labour, without which he cannot work, — and the army will appear and will use force to keep him from doing so.

Thus the alienation from the land, the levy of taxes, the power of the capitalists, form, not the cause, but the result of the wretched condition of the labourers. The fundamental cause why millions of labourers live and work at the will of the minority does not lie in this, that the minority has seized upon the land, and upon the implements of production, and receives the taxes, but in this, that it *can* do so, — that there is violence, an army, which is in the hands of the minority and is ready to kill those who do not wish to do the will of this minority.

When the peasants want to take possession of the land which is considered to be the property of a man of leisure, or when a man does not want to pay the taxes, or when the strikers want to keep other labourers from taking their places, there appear the same peasants, whose land has been taken away, the payers of taxes and the labourers, except that they wear uniforms and bear arms, and they compel their brothers — who are not in uniforms — to go away from the land, to pay taxes, and to stop the strike.

When a man comes to understand this at first, he can hardly believe it, it seems so strange.

The working people want to free themselves, and the working people themselves compel themselves to submit and to remain in slavery.

Why do they do so?

Because the working people, drafted or hired into the army, are subjected to an artificial process of stupefaction and corruption, after which they cannot help but obey their superiors blindly, no matter what they may compel them to do.

This is done in the following manner: a boy is born in the country or in the city. In all the Continental countries, as soon as the boy reaches the age when his strength, agility, and flexibility have reached the highest point, while his spiritual forces are in a most dim and indeterminate state (about twenty years), he is taken into the army, is examined like a beast of burden, and when he is found to be able-bodied, he is attached to some particular part of the army, and is made solemnly to swear that he will slavishly obey his superiors; then he is removed from all the former conditions of his life, is filled up with whiskey or beer, is dressed up in motley garments, and is with other lads like him locked up in barracks, where he is in absolute idleness (that is, doing no useful or rational work), is taught the most insipid military rules

and names of objects, and the use of the implements of murder, — the sword, the bayonet, the rifle, the cannon, — and, above all, is taught, not only blind, but even mechanically reflex obedience to the superiors put over him. Thus it is done in the countries where there is military service; where it does not exist, men specially appointed for the purpose look up for the most part dissipated, but strong men, who have fallen from the right way and either do not wish, or are unable to live by honest labour, fill them with liquor, bribe them, and enlist them in the army, and similarly shut them up in barracks and subject them to the same discipline. The chief problem of the superiors consists in bringing these men to the state of the frog which, when touched, uncontrollably jerks its leg. A good soldier is he who, like this frog, in response to certain shouts of his superior, unconsciously makes the motion demanded. This is obtained by making these unfortunate men, who are dressed in the same motley uniform, for weeks, months, and years, at the sound of the drum and of music, walk, twist around, jump, and do it all together, in a body, and by command. Every failure to obey is punished with the most cruel punishments, even with death. With this, drunkenness, debauchery, idleness, vulgarity, murder are not only not prohibited, but even established: the soldiers are given whiskey, houses of prostitution are arranged for them, they are taught obscene songs, and instructed in murder. (Murder is in this circle of men considered to such an extent a good and praiseworthy matter that under certain conditions the superiors, the officers, are demanded to kill a friend, which is called a duel.) And so a meek and peaceable fellow, after having passed in such a school about a year (before that time the soldier is not yet ready, that is, he has still some human qualities left in him), is turned into what he is wanted to be, — a senseless, cruel, mighty, and terrible instrument of violence in the hands of his superiors.

Whenever I in the winter walk in Moscow past the palace, and near the booth see a young lad, the sentinel, who in his heavy sheepskin fur coat is standing or walking, plashing his enormous overshoes on the sidewalk, supporting on his shoulder a rifle of the latest fashion, with its bayonet sharpened, I always look into his eyes, and every time he turns his glance away from me, and every time I think: a year or two years ago he was a merry village lad, natural, good-natured, who would cheerfully have talked to me in his good Russian, telling me, with the consciousness of his peasant dignity, his whole history; now he looks maliciously and gloomily at me, and to all my questions knows only how to say, "Yes, sir," and, "Can't know, sir." If I should enter through the door at which he is standing, — I always feel like doing so, — or should put my hand on his gun, he would without a minute's hesitation stick the bayonet through my abdomen, would pull the bayonet out of the wound, would wipe it off, and would continue to walk, plashing with his overshoes on the asphaltum, until the arrival of the relief with the corporal, who would whisper the watchword into his ear. And he is not the only one. In Moscow alone, I think, there are thousands of such lads, almost children, who are turned into machines and are armed with guns. There are millions of them in the whole of Russia and in the whole world. These unthinking, but strong and agile lads are picked up, corrupted, and bribed, and, thanks to them, the world is held in subjection. All that is terrible. What is terrible is this, that bad, idle people, thanks to these deceived men, are in possession of all those palaces and all that criminally acquired wealth, that is, of the labour of all the masses. But most terrible is this, that, to do so, they have to bestialize these simple, good fellows, and in this they have partly succeeded.

Let those who own wealth defend it themselves. That would not be so disgusting. But what is terrible is this,

that, to rob the people and defend what has been stolen, they use those very people whom they rob, and for this purpose corrupt their souls.

Thus the soldiers, taken from the labouring classes, use violence against their own brother labourers, because there exists a means for making of people an unconscious instrument of murder, and the governments, in drafting or enlisting soldiers, make use of that means in regard to them.

6

But if that is so, there involuntarily appears the question as to why people become soldiers. Why do their fathers let them become soldiers?

They could become soldiers and be subject to discipline so long as they did not see the consequences of it. But, having once come to see what results from it, why do they continue to subject themselves to this deception?

This is due to the fact that they consider military service not only useful, but unquestionably honourable and good. And they consider it such, because they have been impressed with it by that doctrine to which they are subjected from their childhood and in which they are maintained in their adult age.

And so the existence of the army is also no fundamental cause, but only an effect. The fundamental cause is to be found in that doctrine which is inculcated upon people, that military service, which has for its purpose the killing of men, is not only sinless, but also good, virtuous, and praiseworthy. Thus the cause of the wretched condition of the men lies still farther away than it seems to at first.

At first it seems that the whole matter lies in this, that the landowners have seized the land, the capitalists have taken possession of the implements of labour, while the government takes forcibly the taxes; but when one asks

himself why the land belongs to the rich and the working people cannot make use of it, and why not the working people, but the capitalists, are in possession of the implements of production, one sees that this is due to the fact that there is an army which secures the land to the rich, collects the taxes from the labourers for the use of the rich, and secures the factories and the expensive machines to the rich. If one asks oneself how it is that the working people, who form the army and from whom everything is taken which they need, attack themselves, their fathers and brothers, one sees that the cause of it is this, that the drafted or enlisted soldiers are, by means of methods specially adapted for the purpose, instructed in such a way that they lose everything human and are turned into unconscious instruments of murder, ever submissive to their superiors. When, finally, one asks oneself why people, seeing such deception, continue to enter the army or to pay taxes to hire an army, one sees that the cause of it lies in the doctrine, which is inculcated, not only upon those who are taken into the army, but also upon all men alike, — a doctrine according to which military service is a good and praiseworthy cause, and murder in war is innocent.

Thus the fundamental cause of everything is the doctrine which is inculcated upon the people.

From this come poverty, and debauchery, and hatred, and punishments, and murder.

What is this doctrine?

This doctrine is called Christian, and consists in the following: there is a God, who six thousand years ago created the world and the man Adam. Adam sinned, and God for this punished all men, and then sent His son, just such a God as the Father, down upon earth, to have Him hanged there! This very hanging serves to men as a means of redemption from their punishment for Adam's sin.

If people believe in this, they will be forgiven Adam's sin; if they do not, they will be punished cruelly. The proof of all this being true is found in the fact that all this was revealed to men by that same God, about whose existence we have learned from those same men who preach all that. To say nothing of the different variations in this fundamental doctrine, in accordance with the different denominations, the general practical deduction from it in all the denominations is the same, namely, that men must believe in what is preached to them and must obey the existing authorities.

It is this doctrine that forms the fundamental cause of the deception, according to which people, considering military service to be useful and good, enter the army, and, being turned into machines without a will, oppress themselves. If there are unbelievers among the deceived, these unbelievers do not believe in anything else, and, in consequence, since they have no point of support, submit, like the believers, to the general current, although they see the deception.

And so, to destroy the evil from which men suffer, we need, not the liberation of the land, nor the abolition of the taxes, nor the nationalization of the implements of production, nor even the overthrow of the existing government, but the destruction of that false doctrine, called Christian, in which the men of our time are brought up.

7

At first it seems strange to people who know the Gospel how it was possible for Christianity, which preaches the sonhood to God, spiritual freedom, the brotherhood of men, the abolition of all violence, and the love of our neighbours, to have degenerated into this strange doctrine, called Christian, which preaches blind obedience to the authorities, and murder, whenever the authorities demand

it. But when one stops to think of the process by means of which Christianity has entered into the world, one sees that it could not have been otherwise.

When the pagan sovereigns, Constantine, Charlemagne, Vladímir, accepted Christianity, which was swaddled in pagan forms, and baptized their nations into it, it did not even occur to them that the teaching which they accepted disrupted their regal power, and the army, and the state itself; that is, all that without which life could not be imagined by all those who were the first to accept and introduce Christianity. The destructive force of Christianity at first was not at all perceptible to men; on the contrary, they thought that Christianity supported their power. But the longer the Christian nations existed, the clearer and clearer became the essence of Christianity, and the more obvious became the danger with which Christianity threatened the pagan order. The more this danger became obvious, the more carefully did the ruling classes try to subdue and, if possible, to put out the fire, which they unconsciously brought into the world together with Christianity. They used every possible means for this, — the prohibition to translate and read the gospels, the slaying of all those who pointed out the true meaning of the Christian teaching, the hypnotization of the masses by means of the solemnity and splendour of surroundings, and, above all, shrewd and refined interpretations of the Christian tenets. In proportion as these means were used, Christianity changed more and more, and finally became a doctrine which had in itself nothing dangerous for the pagan order of things, and even justified the pagan order from an apparently Christian point of view. There appeared even Christian rulers, and a Christ-loving army, and Christian wealth, and Christian courts, and Christian punishments.

The ruling classes did the same in relation to Christianity that physicians do in relation to infectious diseases.

They worked out a culture of harmless Christianity, which, when inoculated, makes the real Christianity innocuous. This ecclesiastic Christianity is such that it inevitably either repels sensible people, presenting itself to them as a terrible insipidity, or, being adopted by men, to such an extent removes them from true Christianity that through it they no longer see its real significance and even look upon its true significance with hostility and fury.

It is this innocuous, false Christianity, which from a sense of self-preservation has been worked out through the ages among the ruling classes, and with which the masses are inoculated, which forms the doctrine in consequence of which men calmly commit acts that are harmful to themselves and to their neighbours, and that are even directly immoral and incompatible with the demands of conscience, the most important of which, from its practical consequences, is the entrance into the army, that is, the readiness to commit murder.

The harm of this innocuous, false Christianity consists chiefly in this, that it prescribes nothing and forbids nothing. All the ancient teachings — like the law of Moses and the law of Manu — give rules which demand or forbid certain acts; such also are the Buddhist and the Mohammedan religions; but the ecclesiastic faith gives no rules whatever, except a verbal confession, the recognition of dogmas, fasts, holy sacrament, prayers (and for these even excuses have been invented for the rich), but only lies, and permits everything, even what is contrary to the lowest demands of morality. According to this ecclesiastic faith everything is allowed: it is allowed to own slaves (in Europe and in America the church has been the defender of slavery); it is allowed to acquire wealth, which is got through the labour of our oppressed brothers; it is not only allowed to be rich amidst Lazaruses who crawl under the tables of the feasting, but it is even good

and laudable to do so, if one-thousandth is contributed for churches and hospitals. The church gives its blessing to the forcible defence of our wealth against the needy, to the imprisonment of men in solitary cells, to chaining them up, to fastening them to wheelbarrows, and to executing them; it is allowed to commit debauchery during one's whole youth, and then to call one such debauchery marriage and get the church's permission for it; it is allowed to get a divorce and again be married; it is possible, above all, to kill, not only in one's own defence, but also in defence of one's apples, and as a punishment (punishment means instruction, — to kill as an instruction!), and, above all else, it is right and laudable to kill in war, by command of the authorities — the church not only permits, but even commands it.

Thus the root of all is in the false doctrine.

Let the false doctrine be destroyed, and there will be no army; and if there is no army, there will naturally be destroyed all the acts of violence, the oppression, the corruption, which now are practised on the nations. But so long as men shall be brought up in the pseudo-Christian teaching, which permits everything, including murder, the army will be in the hands of the minority; and this minority will always make use of this army for the purpose of depriving the masses of the products of their labour and, what is still worse, for the corruption of the masses, because without the corruption of the masses it could not take away from them the products of their labours.

8

The root of all the wretchedness of the masses lies in that false doctrine which is taught to them under guise of Christianity.

And so it would seem to be obvious that the duty of every man who has freed himself from the religious de-

ception and who wishes to serve the masses is in words and deeds to help the deceived men to free themselves from that deception, which forms the cause of their wretched condition. It would seem that, besides the general duty of every moral man to arraign the lies and profess the truth which he knows, every one who wishes to serve the masses cannot help but wish out of sympathy to free his brothers from the deception which causes them all kinds of unhappiness and in which they abide. And yet these same people, who are free from the deception, are independent, and have been educated at the expense of the working classes, and for this reason alone are obliged to serve them, but fail to see this.

"The religious teaching is not important," say these people. "It is a matter for each man's conscience. What is important and necessary is the political, social, economic structure of society, and to this should be directed all the efforts of men who wish to serve the masses. But the religious teachings are all of them of no importance, and, like all superstitions, they will disappear in their time."

Thus speak the cultured people, and, wishing to serve the masses, some of them enter the service of the government, — the army, the clergy, the parliament, — and try, without arraigning the religious deception in which the masses are, by their participation in the governmental activity to improve the external forms of the life of the deceived masses; others, the revolutionists, who just as little touch upon the beliefs of the masses, enter into a struggle with the governments, trying to take possession of the power by the same means of deception and violence that are practised by the governments; others again, the socialists, establish labour-unions, societies, strikes, assuming that the condition of the masses, in spite of their remaining in the same error of superstition and ignorance which is produced by the false doctrine, can be

ameliorated. But none of them hinder the dissemination of the false religion, on which all the evil is based, and when the necessity for it arises, they even perform the religious rites, which they consider to be false, — they themselves take the oath, take part in divine services and solemnities which stultify the masses, and do not interfere with the instruction given to their own children and to those of others in what is called religion, that very lie on which the enslavement of the masses is based. This failure to comprehend in what lies the main cause of the evil (and the cultured people could and should more than any others help destroy this false doctrine), and to what all their efforts ought more particularly to be directed, and the deviation of the efforts upon false paths, form one of the chief causes why the existing structure of life, which is obviously false and pernicious for people, is persistently maintained, in spite of its well-recognized incompatibility.

All the calamities of our world are due to this, that the true Christian teaching, which corresponds to the demands of our time, is concealed from men, and that in its place a false doctrine is preached.

If the men who want to serve God and their neighbours only comprehended that humanity is not moved by animal demands, but by spiritual forces, that the chief spiritual force which moves humanity is religion, that is, the determination of the meaning of life, and, in consequence of this meaning, the distinction between good and evil, and between what is important and unimportant. If men only understood that, they would see at once that the fundamental cause of the calamities of humanity at present does not lie in external material causes, — not in political, nor in economic conditions, but in the distortion of the Christian religion: in the substitution for the truths needed by humanity and corresponding to its present age, of a collection of senseless, immoral insipidi-

ties and blasphemies, called the ecclesiastic faith, by means of which what is not good is considered good, and what is unimportant is considered important, and vice versa, — what is good is considered bad, and what is important — unimportant.

If only the best, the independent people, who sincerely wish to serve the masses, understood that it is impossible by any external measures to improve the condition of a man who considers it bad to eat meat on Friday and good to punish a guilty man with death, and important to show proper respect for an image or for the emperor, and unimportant to swear to do the will of other people and to learn to commit murder; if men only understood that no parliaments, strikes, unions, consumers' and producers' leagues, inventions, schools, universities, and academies, no revolutions, can be of any essential value to people with a false religious world-conception, all the forces of the best people would naturally be directed upon the cause, and not upon the effect, — not upon the state activity, upon revolutions, upon socialism, but upon the arraignment of the false religious doctrine and the establishment of the true teaching.

If men would only act thus, all the political, economical, and social questions would solve themselves naturally, as they ought to be solved, and not as we foretell or prescribe.

All these questions will, naturally, not be solved at once and according to our wish, as we are accustomed to arrange the lives of other people, caring only for this, that externally these lives should resemble what we want them to be (precisely what all the governments are doing); but these questions will certainly be solved, if only the religious world-conception of the people shall be changed, and they will be solved the more quickly, the more we shall apply our forces, not to the effects, but to the causes of phenomena.

But the arraignment of the false religion and the assertion of the true religion are a very distant and slow means, we are told. Whether it be distant or slow, it is the only means, or, at least, such that without it all other means will be ineffective.

As I look at the structure of human life, which is contrary to reason and to feeling, I ask myself: "Need it be so?"

And the answer at which I arrive is, that it need not be so.

It need not be, it must not be, and it will not be.

But it will not be, not when men shall in one way or another reconstruct their relations, but only when men shall stop believing in the lie in which they are brought up, and shall believe in the highest truth, which was revealed nineteen hundred years ago, and which is clear, simple, and accessible to their reason.

Yásnaya Polyána, October 14, 1900.

ANSWER

To the Decree of the Synod of February 20–22 and to Letters Received by Me on That Occasion

1901

ANSWER

To the Decree of the Synod of February 20–22 and to Letters Received by Me on That Occasion

> "He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all." — *Coleridge.*

At first I had no intention of answering the decree of the Synod concerning me, but this decree called forth a very large number of letters, in which correspondents who are unknown to me either scold me for denying what I do not deny, or admonish me to believe in what I have not stopped believing in, or again express their fellowship of ideas with me, which hardly exists in reality, and their sympathy, to which I have hardly a right; and so I have decided to answer the decree itself, pointing out what is unjust in it, and the letters of my correspondents, whom I do not know.

The decree of the Synod has, in general, very many faults. It is illegal, or intentionally ambiguous; it is arbitrary, ungrounded, untruthful, and, besides, contains libel and incitements to evil sentiments and acts.

It is illegal, or intentionally ambiguous, because, if it is meant to be an excommunication from the church, it does not satisfy those ecclesiastic rules by which such an ex-

communication may be pronounced; but if it is a declaration that he who does not believe in the church and its dogmas does not belong to it, that is self-understood, and such a declaration can have no other aim than this, that, though it is in reality not an excommunication, it may appear as such, which actually happened, for it was understood as such.

It is arbitrary, because it accuses me alone of unbelief in all the points mentioned in the decree, whereas not only many persons, but almost all educated people share such unbelief, and have constantly expressed it in conversations, and in writing, and in pamphlets, and in books.

It is ungrounded, because as the chief cause for its issuance is given the great dissemination of false doctrine, which corrupts people, whereas it is well known to me that there are hardly a hundred men who share my views, and that the dissemination of my ideas about religion, thanks to the censorship, is so insignificant that the majority of men who have read the decree of the Senate have not the slightest idea as to what I have written about religion, as may be seen from the letters which I have received.

It contains an obvious untruth, because it says in it that on the part of the church there have been made attempts at appealing to my conscience, but that they were not successful. Nothing of the kind has ever happened.

It represents what in juridical language is called a libel, because it contains professedly untrue statements, which are intended to injure me.

It is, finally, an incitement to bad sentiments and acts, because it has provoked, as was to have been expected, in unenlightened and unthinking people malice and hatred against me, which rise to threats of assassination and are expressed in the letters received by me: "Now you are given over to anathema, and after your death you will

go to everlasting torments and will die like a dog — anathema, old devil — be cursed," writes one. Another rebukes the government for not having yet locked me up in a monastery, and fills his letter with curses. A third writes: "If the government does not take you away, we will ourselves make you shut up;" the letter ends with curses. "To make an end of you, scavenger, we shall find the means for it," writes a fourth; there follow indecent curses. Similar signs of malice I have, since the decree of the Synod, observed in meeting certain people. On the very 25th of February, when the decree was published, I heard, as I crossed a square, the words, "Here is a devil in human form," and if the crowd had been differently composed, it is very likely that I should have been beaten, as some years ago they beat a man near Panteleymónov Tower.

Thus the decree of the Synod is altogether bad; the fact that at the end of the decree it says that the persons signing it pray that I may become such as they are does not make matters any better.

So it is in general; in particular this decree is not just for the following reasons. In the decree it says: "The world-known writer, Russian by birth, Orthodox by baptism and education, Count Tolstóy, in the blindness of his proud mind, boldly arose against the Lord and against His Christ and His sacred charge, and openly, in the presence of all men, renounced the Orthodox Mother Church, which has nurtured and educated him."

That I have renounced the church which calls itself Orthodox is quite true.

But I have not renounced it because I arose against the Lord, but, on the contrary, because I wished with all my heart to serve Him. Before renouncing the church and the union with the people, which had been inexpressibly dear to me, I, having from certain symptoms come to doubt the truth of the church, devoted several years to the

theoretic and the practical investigation of the church doctrine: in the theoretic investigation I read everything I could about the church doctrine, and studied and critically analyzed the dogmatic theology; in the practical investigation I for the period of more than a year strictly followed all the prescriptions of the church, observing all the fasts and all the church celebrations. And I convinced myself that the doctrine of the church was in theory a cunning and harmful deceit, and in practice a collection of the grossest superstitions and sorcery, which completely conceals the whole meaning of the Christian teaching.[1]

I actually renounced the church, stopped executing its rites, and asked my relatives in my will not to admit any church servants at my death, and to take my body away as quickly as possible, without any magical formulæ and prayers, as they take away every nauseating and useless thing, that it may not trouble the living.

But as to its saying that "I devoted my literary activity and God-given talent to the dissemination among the masses of teachings which are contrary to Christ and to the church," and so forth, and that "in my writings and letters which are scattered by me and my disciples in great numbers all over the world, but especially within the boundaries of our beloved country, I with the zeal of

[1] We need only read the ritual, to follow those ceremonies which without cessation are performed by the Orthodox clergy, and are considered to be Christian divine service, to see that all these ceremonies are nothing but various methods of sorcery, adapted for all incidents of life. For a child after death to go to heaven, it has to be anointed with oil and bathed while certain words are enunciated; for a woman in childbirth no longer to be unclean, certain magical formulæ have to be pronounced; for success in some affair or peaceful life in a new house, for a crop of corn to be good, for a drought to be broken, for a cure from some disease, for an improvement in the condition of a deceased man in the other world, — for all that and thousands of other circumstances there are certain magical formulæ, which in return for certain offerings are pronounced by a priest in a certain place. — *Author's Note.*

a fanatic preach the overthrow of all the dogmas of the Orthodox Church and of the very essence of the Christian religion," that is not true. I have never had any thought as to the dissemination of my teaching. It is true, I have for my own sake expressed in my writings my understanding of Christ's teaching, and have not concealed these writings from men who wished to become acquainted with them, but I never printed them myself, and I told people about the way I understood Christ's teaching only when I was asked about it. To such people I told what I thought, and I gave them my books, if I had any.

Then it says that I deny "God, the Creator and Provider of the universe, glorified in the Holy Trinity, and the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man, the Redeemer and Saviour of the world, who suffered for the sake of us men and for the sake of our salvation, and who rose from the dead," and that I deny "the seedless conception of the Lord Christ in His manhood, and the virginity of the Immaculate Mother of God before and after His birth." It is quite true that I deny the incomprehensible Trinity, the now senseless fable about the fall of the first man, the blasphemous history of a God born of a virgin, who redeems the human race. But I not only do not deny God the Spirit, God — love, the one God, the beginning of everything, but even do not recognize anything as actually existing outside of God, and see the whole meaning of life only in the fulfilment of God's will, as expressed in the Christian teaching.

Again it says: "He does not recognize the life after death, and retribution." If the life after death is to be taken in the sense of the second advent, hell with its everlasting torments and devils, and heaven — a constant bliss, it is quite true that I do not recognize such a life after death; but the eternal life and retribution here and everywhere I recognize to such an extent that, standing on account of my years on the brink of the grave, I have

often to make efforts in order not to wish for carnal death, that is, for a birth to a new life, and I believe that every good act increases the true good of my everlasting life, and that every bad act diminishes it.

It also says that I deny all the sacraments. That is quite true. All the sacraments I consider a low, coarse sorcery, which does not harmonize with the conception of a God and with the Christian teaching, and, besides, is a violation of the directest precepts of the Gospel. In the baptism of children I see an obvious distortion of all that meaning which baptism may have had for adults, who consciously accepted Christianity; in the performance of the sacrament of marriage on people who are known to have come together before, and in the admission of divorces, and in the sanctification of marriages of divorced people I see a direct violation of the meaning and the letter of the Gospel teaching.

In the periodic forgiveness of sins at confessions I see an injurious deception, which only encourages immorality and destroys the fear of sinning.

In the unction with chrism, as well as in the anointment, I see the methods of gross sorcery, as also in the worship of images and relics, and also in all those ceremonies, prayers, incantations, with which the ritual is filled. In communion I see the deification of the flesh and a distortion of the Christian teaching. In priesthood I see, besides an obvious preparation for deceit, a direct violation of the words of Christ, who directly forbade any one to be called teacher, father, instructor (Matt. xxiii. 8–10).

It says, finally, that, as the last and highest degree of my guilt, "I make light of the most sacred objects of faith, and have not stopped before ridiculing the most sacred of sacraments, — the Eucharist." It is quite true that I have not stopped before describing simply and objectively what a priest does for the preparation of this so-called

sacrament; but it is quite untrue that this so-called sacrament is something sacred and that it is blasphemy to describe it simply, just as it is done. It is not blasphemy to call a partition a partition and not an iconostasis, a cup a cup, and not a poterion, and so forth; but it is a terrible, unceasing, shocking blasphemy for people to use all the possible means of deceit and hypnotization, and to assure the children and the simple masses that, if bits of bread are cut in a certain way and while pronouncing certain words, and are put into wine, God enters into these bits; that he in whose name, when living, a bit is taken out, will be well, and that he in whose name, when dead, such a piece is taken out, will fare better in the world to come; and that into him who eats this piece God will enter.

That is terrible!

No matter how one may understand Christ's personality, His teaching, which destroys the evil of the world, which so simply, easily, and indubitably gives the good to men, if only they shall not distort it, — this teaching is all concealed, all changed into a gross sorcery of bathing, smearing with oil, motions of the body, incantations, swallowing of pieces, and so forth, so that nothing is left of the teaching. And if any man tries to remind these people that Christ's teaching is not in these sorceries, not in Te Deums, masses, tapers, images, but in this, that men should love one another, should not pay evil with evil, should not judge, should not kill one another, there arises the indignation of those to whom this deception is advantageous, and these men in the hearing of all and with incredible boldness say in the churches and print in books, newspapers, and catechisms that Christ never forbade swearing (oath of allegiance), never forbade murder (executions, wars), and that the doctrine of non-resistance to evil was with satanic cunning invented by Christ's foes.[1]

[1] Speech of Amvrósi, the Bishop of Kharkov. — *Author's Note.*

What above all else is terrible is this, that people to whom this is advantageous deceive not only adults, but, since they have the power for it, children also, those same children of whom Christ says that woe shall be to him who shall deceive them. What is terrible is this, that these men for the sake of their petty advantages do such a terrible evil, by concealing from men the truth which was revealed by Christ and which gives the good, and not one-thousandth part of which is balanced by advantage which they derive from the evil. They act like that robber who kills a whole family, five or six people, in order to carry off an old sleeveless coat and forty kopeks in money. They would have gladly given him all their apparel and all their money, if only he would not kill them; but he cannot act differently.

The same is true of religious deceivers. They could be supported ten times better, in the greatest luxury, if only they did not ruin people with their deceit. But they cannot act differently. It is this that is so terrible. And so it is not only possible, but even necessary to arraign their deception. If there is anything sacred, it is certainly not that which they call a sacrament, but this duty of arraigning their religious deception, when you see it.

When a Chuvash smears his idol with cream and scourges it, I can do so as not to offend his belief, and pass by with equanimity, because he does this in the name of his superstition, which is alien to me, and this does not touch on what is sacred to me; but when people with their savage superstition, no matter how many there may be of them, how old their superstition may be, or how powerful they may be, — in the name of that God by whom I live, and of that teaching of Christ which gave me life and may give it to all men, — preach gross sorcery, I cannot look on in peace. And if I call by name what they do, I do only what I must, what I cannot help

doing, if I believe in God and the Christian teaching. But if they call the arraignment of their deception a blasphemy, that only proves the force of their deception, and must only increase the efforts of men who believe in God and in Christ's teaching, in order to destroy this deception, which conceals the true God from men.

Of Christ, who drove the oxen, the sheep, and the money-changers out of the temple, they must have said that He was blaspheming.

If He were to come now and see what is being done in His name in the church, He would with greater and more legitimate anger throw out all those terrible corporales, Eucharist spears, crosses, cups, tapers, images, and all that by means of which they, committing sorceries, conceal God and His teaching from men. So this is what is true and untrue in the Synod's decree concerning me. I really do not believe in what they say they believe. But I believe in much of what they wish to assure people that I do not believe in.

What I believe in is this: I believe in God, whom I understand as Spirit, as Love, as the beginning of everything. I believe that He is in me and I in Him. I believe that God's will is most clearly and comprehensibly expressed in the teaching of the man Christ, whom to understand as God and pray to I consider the greatest blasphemy. I believe that the greatest true good of man is the fulfilment of God's will, but His will is this, that men should love one another and in consequence of this should treat others as they wish that others should treat them, as, indeed, it says in the Gospel that in this is all the law and the prophets. I believe that the meaning of the life of every man is, therefore, only in the augmentation of love in himself; that this augmentation of love leads the individual man in this life to a greater and ever greater good, and gives after death a greater good, the greater the love is in man, and at the same time

more than anything else contributes to the establishment of the kingdom of God in the world, that is, of an order of life with which the now existing discord, deception, and violence will give way to free agreement, truth, and brotherly love of men among themselves. I believe that there is but one means for success in love, and that is prayer, not public prayer in temples, which is directly forbidden by Christ (Matt. vi. 5–13), but such as Christ has given us an example of, — solitary prayer, which consists in the establishment and strengthening in our consciousness of the meaning of our life and our independence of everything except God's will.

Whether these my beliefs offend, pain, or tempt any one, or interfere with anything or any one, or displease any one, — I can change them as little as I can change my body. I have to live myself, die myself (and very soon at that), and so I can absolutely not believe otherwise than I do, while getting ready to go to that God from whom I have come. I do not believe that my faith is unchangeable and incontestably true for all times, but I do not see any other, — one which is more simple and clear, and which answers all the demands of my mind and heart; when I find such a one, I will accept it at once, because God needs nothing but the truth. But I am equally unable to return to that from which I have just come out with such sufferings, as a flying bird can no longer enter into the shell of the egg from which it came out.

"He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all," said Coleridge.

I went the opposite way. I began by loving my Orthodox faith more than peace, then I loved Christianity more than my church, but now I love truth better than anything in the world. And until now truth for me has

coincided with Christianity, as I understand it. And I profess this Christianity; and in the measure in which I profess it, I live calmly and joyously, and calmly and joyously approach death.

April 4, 1901.

THE ONLY MEANS

1901

THE ONLY MEANS

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets (Matt. vii. 12).

1

THERE are more than one thousand millions of working people in the world. All the bread, all the commodities of this world, everything men live and are rich by, — all that is made by the working people. But the working people live in constant need, ignorance, slavery, and contempt of all those whom they dress, feed, provide for, and serve.

The land is taken away from them and considered to be the property of those who do not work upon it; thus, to gain his sustenance from it, a labourer must do everything which the owners of the land demand of him. But if the labourer leaves the land and goes to work in factories or plants, he falls into the slavery of the rich, for whom he must all his life work ten, twelve, and fourteen hours a day, doing somebody else's monotonous, tedious, and frequently injurious work. If he manages to provide for himself on the land or in doing somebody else's work, so as to be able to feed himself without suffering want, he will not be left alone, but they will demand of him taxes and, besides, will take him for three, four, or five

years into the army, or will compel him to pay special taxes for military affairs. If he wants to use the land, without paying for it, or if he arranges a strike and wants to keep other labourers from taking his place, or refuses to pay the taxes, they send the army out against him, wound and kill him, and by force compel him to work and to pay taxes as before.

Thus, the working people live throughout the whole world, not like men, but like beasts of burden, who are compelled all their lives to do, not what they need, but what their oppressors want, and for which their oppressors give them precisely as much food, clothing, and rest as they need in order to be able to work without cessation. But that small part of men which lords it over the working people enjoys everything which the masses produce, and lives in idleness and mad luxury, uselessly and immorally wasting the labours of millions.

Thus lives the majority of men in the whole world, not only in Russia, but also in France, in Germany, in England, in China, in India, in Africa, — everywhere. Who is to blame for it? And how can it be mended? Some say that those are to blame who, without working on the land, own it, and that the land ought to be given back to the working people; others say that the rich are to blame, who own the implements of labour, that is, the factories and plants, and that it is necessary that the factories and plants should become the property of the working people; others again say that the whole structure of life is to blame, and that it is necessary to change this whole structure.

Is this true?

2

Some five years ago, during the coronation of Nicholas II., the masses in Moscow were promised a free treat of wine, beer, and lunch. The masses moved toward the

place where the food was distributed, and a crush ensued. Those in front were knocked off their feet by those who were behind them, and these, in their turn, were pushed by those still farther back, and all, without seeing what was going on in front, pushed and crushed one another. The feeble were knocked off their feet by those who were stronger, and then the stronger people themselves, jammed in and suffocating, fell and were trampled upon by those who were behind them and could not arrest the motion. Thus several thousand people, old and young, men and women, were crushed to death.

When all was over, people began to reflect as to who was to blame for it. Some said that the police were to blame; others said that the managers were to blame; others again said that the Tsar was to blame, for having invented this stupid kind of a celebration. All, but themselves, were blamed. And yet it would seem clear, only those were to blame who, to be the first to get a handful of cakes and a beaker of wine, rushed forward, without paying any attention to any one else, and pushed and crushed the others.

Does not the same happen with the working people? The working people are worn out, crushed, turned into slaves, only because for the sake of insignificant advantages they themselves ruin their lives and those of their brothers. The working people complain of the landowners, the government, the manufacturers, the army.

But the landowners use the land, the government collects the taxes, the manufacturers dispose of the workmen, and the army suppresses the strikes, only because the working people not only aid the landowners, the government, the manufacturers, the army, but themselves do all that of which they complain. If a landowner is able to use thousands of desyatínas of land, without working it himself, he does so only because the working people for their advantage go and work for him, and serve as his

janitors, outriders, and clerks. In the same way the taxes are collected by the government from the working people, only because the working people, with an eye to a salary, which is collected from them, become elders, tax collectors, policemen, custom-house servants, border guards, that is, aid the government to do what they complain of. Again the working people complain that the manufacturers lower the wages and make the men work longer and ever longer hours; but this, too, is done only because the working people knock down one another's wages and, besides, hire out to the manufacturers as receivers, superintendents, janitors, and chief workmen, and for their masters' advantage search, fine, and in every way oppress their brothers.

Finally the working people complain that the army is sent out against them, when they want to take possession of the land which they consider their own, or do not pay the taxes, or arrange strikes.

But the army consists of soldiers, and the soldiers are the same working people who, some from advantage, others from fear, enter military service and make under oath a promise which is contrary both to their consciences and to the divine law recognized by them, that they will kill all those whom the authorities shall order them to kill.

Thus all the calamities of the working people are caused by themselves.

They need only stop aiding the rich and the government, and all their calamities will be destroyed of themselves.

Why, then, do they continue to do what ruins them?

3

Two thousand years ago people began to be acquainted with God's law that it is necessary to do unto others as

one would have others treat us, or, as this is expressed by the Chinese sage Confucius, "Do not do to others what you do not want that others should do to you."

This law is simple and comprehensible to every man, and obviously gives the greatest good accessible to men. And so it would seem that, as soon as men have learned this law, they ought immediately to carry it out to the best of their ability, and ought to use all their forces for the purpose of teaching this law to the younger generations and familiarizing them with its execution.

Thus, it would seem, all people ought to have acted long ago, since this law was almost simultaneously expressed by Confucius, by the Jewish sage Hillel, and by Christ.

Especially the men of our Christian world, it would seem, ought to have acted thus, since they recognize as the chief divine revelation that Gospel in which it says directly that this is the whole law and the prophets, that is, all the teaching which men need.

Meanwhile almost two thousand years have passed, and men, far from executing this law themselves and teaching it to their children, for the most part do not know it themselves, or, if they know it, consider it to be unnecessary or impracticable.

At first this seems strange, but when one considers how people lived before the discovery of this law, and how long they lived thus, and how incompatible this law is with the life of humanity as at present constituted, one begins to understand why this happened so.

This happened so because, while men did not know the law that for the good of all men each ought to do unto another what he wished that others should do to him, each man tried for his advantage to have as much power over other men as possible. Having seized such power, each man, to be able without molestation to enjoy it, was compelled in his turn to submit to those who were

stronger than he, and to aid them. These stronger ones, in their turn, had to submit to those who were still stronger, and to aid them.

Thus, in those societies which did not know the law that we ought to treat others as we wish that others should treat us, a small number of men always ruled all the rest.

And so it is comprehensible that, when this law was revealed to men, the small number of men who ruled the rest not only did not wish to accept this law, but could not even wish that people over whom they ruled should learn of it and accept it.

A small number of ruling people have always known full well that their power is based on this, that those over whom they rule are constantly at war with each other, each trying to make the others submit to him. And so they have always employed all means at their command in order to conceal the existence of this law from their subjects.

They do not conceal this law in that they deny it, — which is, indeed, impossible, since the law is clear and simple, — but in that they put forth hundreds and thousands of other laws, recognizing them as more important and obligatory than the law about doing unto another as one would that others should do to oneself.

Some of these people, the priests, preach hundreds of church dogmas, rites, sacrificial ceremonies, prayers, which have nothing in common with the law about doing unto others as one would that others should do to oneself, — giving them out as the most important laws of God, the non-performance of which leads to eternal perdition.

Others, the rulers, accepting the doctrine invented by the priests and regarding it as the law, on its basis establish governmental decrees which are directly opposed to the law of mutuality, and under the threat of punishment demand that all men shall perform them.

Others again, the learned and the rich, who do not recognize God or any obligatory law of His, teach that there is only science and its laws, which they, the learned, reveal and the rich know, and that, for all people to fare well, it is necessary by means of schools, lectures, theatres, concerts, galleries, assemblies to acquire the same idle life which the learned and the rich live, and that then all that evil from which the working people suffer will come to an end of its own accord.

Neither of these deny the law itself, but side by side with it put forth such a mass of every kind of theological, governmental, and scientific laws, that amidst them that clear and all-accessible law of God, the fulfilment of which indubitably liberates the majority of men from their sufferings, becomes imperceptible and even entirely disappears.

It is this that has produced the remarkable fact that the working people, who are crushed by the governments and by the rich, continue generation after generation to ruin their lives and the lives of their brothers; and, having recourse, for the sake of alleviating their condition, to the most complicated, cunning, and difficult of means, such as prayers, sacrificial ceremonies, the humble execution of governmental demands, unions, savings-banks, assemblies, strikes, revolutions, fail to have recourse to the one means, the fulfilment of the law of God, which certainly frees them from all their calamities.

4

"But is it possible that in so simple and short an utterance, as the one that men must act toward others as they wish that others should act to them, is contained the whole law of God and all the guidance of human life?" will say those who are used to the intricacy and

confusion of the theological, governmental, and scientific considerations.

To such people it appears that the law of God and the guidance of human life must be expressed in diffuse, complicated theories, and so cannot be expressed in such a short and simple utterance.

Indeed, the law about doing unto another as we would that others should do to us is very brief and very simple, but it is this very brevity and simplicity that show that this law is true, indubitable, eternal, and good, a law of God, worked out by a millennial life of the whole of humanity, and not the production of one man or of one circle of men, which calls itself the church, the state, or science.

The theological reflections about the fall of the first man, about his redemption, about the second advent, or the governmental and scientific disquisitions about parliaments, supreme power, the theory of punishment, of property, of values, the classification of the sciences, natural selection, and so forth, may be very astute and profound, but are always accessible to but a small number of men. But the law about treating other people as we would that others should treat us is accessible to all men, without distinction of race, faith, culture, or even age.

Besides, the theological, governmental, scientific reflections, which are regarded as the truth in one place and at one time, are regarded as a lie in another place and at another time; but the law about treating others as we would that others should treat us is regarded as true wherever it is known, and never ceases to be the truth for those who have once learned it.

But the chief difference between this law and all other laws, and its chief advantage, is this, that all the theological, governmental, and scientific laws not only do not pacify people and give them the good, but frequently cause the greatest enmity and sufferings.

But the law about doing unto others as we would that others should do to us, or about not doing unto others as we would that others should not do to us, can produce nothing but concord and the good. And so the deductions from this law are infinitely beneficent and varied, defining all possible relations of men among themselves, and everywhere putting concord and mutual service in the place of discord and struggle. If only men, having freed themselves from the deceptions which conceal this law from them, would recognize its obligatoriness and would work out all its applications to life, there would appear that science, now absent, but common to all men and most important in the world, which would show how on the basis of this law are to be settled all conflicts, both of separate individuals among themselves and between separate individuals and society. If this now lacking science were established and worked out, and if all adults and all children were taught it, as now they are taught harmful superstitions and frequently useless and harmful sciences, the whole life of men would be changed, and so would all those grievous conditions in which now the vast majority of them live.

5

In the Bible tradition it says that God gave His law to men long before the law about not doing to others what we do not want that others should do to us.

In this law there was the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." This commandment was for its time as significant and as fruitful as the later commandment about doing to others what we would that others should do to us, but to it befell the same as did to this later commandment. It was not directly rejected by men, but, like the later commandment of mutuality, it was lost amidst other rules and precepts, which were recognized as

of equal or even greater importance than the law of the inviolability of human life. If there were but this one commandment, and Moses, according to tradition, had brought down on the tables, as the only law of God, nothing but the few words, "Thou shalt not kill," men ought to have recognized the obligatoriness of fulfilling this law, for which no other obligation could be substituted. And if men had recognized this law as the chief and only law of God, and had carried it out strictly, as they now carry out the celebration of the Sabbath, the worship of the images, communion, the non-eating of pork, and so forth, the whole of the human life would have been changed, and there would be no possibility for war, nor slavery, nor the rich men's seizure of the land of the poor, nor the possession of the products of labour by the many, because all this is based only on the possibility or on the threat of murder.

Thus it would be if the law, "Thou shalt not kill," were recognized as the only law of God. But when, on a par with this law, they recognized as just as important the commandments about the Sabbath, about not pronouncing God's name, and other commandments, there naturally arose, besides, new decrees of the priests, which were recognized as of equal importance, and the one greatest law of God, "Thou shalt not kill," which changed the whole life of men, was drowned among them, and not only did it become not always obligatory, but there were also found cases when it was possible to act quite contrary to it, so that this law has not even to this day received the significance which is proper to it.

The same happened with the law about acting toward others as we would that others should act toward us.

Thus the chief evil from which men suffer has for a long time not consisted in this, that they do not know God's true law, but in this, that men, to whom the knowledge and the execution of the true law is inconvenient,

being unable to destroy or overthrow it, invent "precept upon precept and rule upon rule," as Isaiah says, and give them out as just as obligatory as, or even more obligatory than the true laws of God. And so, the only thing that now is needed for freeing men from their sufferings, is this, that they should free themselves from all the theological, governmental, and scientific reflections, which are proclaimed to be obligatory laws of life, and, having freed themselves, should naturally recognize as more binding upon them than all the other precepts and laws, that true, eternal law, which is already known to them, and gives, not only to a few, but to all men, the greatest possible good in social life.

6

"But," will say some, "no matter how correct the law about doing to others what we would that others should do to us may be in itself, it cannot be applied to all cases in life. Let men recognize this law to be always binding, without any exceptions whatever, and they will be compelled to recognize as inadmissible the use of any violence by any set of men upon any other, since no one wants any violence to be used against him. But without the use of violence over some people the individual cannot be made safe, property cannot be protected, the country cannot be defended, the existing order cannot be maintained."

God says to men: "In order that you may everywhere and always be well off, fulfil my law about doing to others what you would that others should do to you."

But men who established a certain order in the year 1901 in England, Germany, France, or Russia say: "Suppose we should fare worse, if we fulfilled the law given to us by God?"

We accept a law which is made by an assembly of

men, no matter how strange it may be and by what bad men it may be made, and we are not afraid to fulfil it; but we are afraid to fulfil the law which is not only in agreement with reason and conscience, but which is also directly expressed in the book which we accept as God's revelation, as though saying: "Suppose something bad should result from it, or that it should lead to disorder."

Is it not obvious that the men who speak and think so are not speaking of order, but of that disorder in which they live and which is advantageous for them?

Order is in their opinion a state in which they are able to feast on other people; but disorder is that state when the people devoured wish that men should stop devouring them.

Such considerations show only that the men who belong to the small number of the ruling class feel, for the most part unconsciously, that the recognition of the law about doing unto others as we would that others should do unto us, and its fulfilment by men, not only destroys their advantageous social position, but also reveals all their immorality and cruelty. These people cannot reflect differently.

But it is time for the working people, who are driven off the land, crushed under taxes, driven to convict labour in factories, changed into slave soldiers, who torture themselves and their brothers, to understand that only the belief in the law of God and its fulfilment will free them from their sufferings.

The non-fulfilment of this law and the ever increasing calamities resulting from it urge them to it. It is time for the labouring people to understand that their salvation lies only in this, that they need but begin to fulfil the law of mutuality, in order that their situation should at once be improved, — and it will be improved in proportion as the number of men who act toward others as they would that others should act toward them shall be increased.

And this is not mere words, not abstract reflections, like the religious, governmental, socialistic, scientific theories, but an actual means of liberation.

The theological, governmental, and scientific reflections and promises afford the good to the working people, some in the world to come, and others in this world, but at such a distant future, that the bones of those who live and suffer now will long ago have rotted; but the fulfilment of the law about doing unto others what we would that others should do unto us immediately and incontestably improves the condition of the working people.

Even if all the working people did not see clearly that by working on the lands of the capitalists and in their factories they give the capitalists the chance of using the products of the labours of their brothers, and thus violate the law of mutuality, or, if they saw it and through want did not have the strength to decline such work, the refraining from such work, even by a few, would embarrass the capitalists and would at once improve the general condition of the working people. And the refraining from a direct participation in the activity of the capitalists and the government in the capacity of overseers, clerks, collectors of taxes, custom-house servants, and so forth, who obviously are opposed to the law of mutuality, would still more improve the condition of the working people, even if not all should be able to abstain from such an activity. And the refusal of the working people to take part in the army, which has murder for its aim, — an act most opposed to the law of mutuality, — and which of late has been more and more frequently directed against the labourers, would absolutely change the position of the working people for the better.

7

God's law is not God's law because, as the priests always assert in regard to their laws, it was in a miracu-

lous way enunciated by God himself, but because it faultlessly and obviously points out to men that path which, if they travel upon it, will certainly free them from their sufferings and will give them the greatest internal — spiritual — and external — physical — good, and this will be attained not by a chosen few, but by all men without any exception.

Such is the law of God about treating others as we would that others should treat us. It shows to people that, fulfilling it, they will certainly receive the inner, spiritual good of the consciousness of agreement with the will of God and of the increase of love in themselves and in others, and at the same time in social life the greatest certain good accessible to them; and that, in departing from it, they certainly make their condition worse.

Indeed, it is obvious to every man who does not take part in the struggle of men among themselves, but observes life from without, that the people who struggle among themselves act precisely like gamesters who give up their certain, though insignificant, property for the very doubtful possibility of its increase.

Whether a working man who underbids his companions or who goes to work for the rich or enters military service will improve his condition, is as doubtful as this, whether the gamester will win in putting up his stake.

There can be thousands of casualties by which his condition will remain such as it is, or even get worse than it is. But it is unquestionable that his agreement to work for smaller wages or his readiness to serve the capitalists and the government will make the condition of all the working people, and his with theirs, slightly worse, — and this is as unquestionable as that the gamester will certainly lose the stake which he risks.

For a man who does not take part in the struggle, but observes life, it is obvious that just as in games of hazard, in lotteries, in the exchange, it is only the keepers of the

gambling-houses, of the lotteries, and of the brokers' offices who get rich, while all players get ruined, so also in life it is the governments, the rich, in general the oppressors, who become enriched; but all the working people who, in the hope of improving their situation, depart from the law of mutuality, only make the situation of all working people worse, and consequently their own situation together with the rest.

God's law is God's law even because it defines man's position in the world, showing him that better thing which he can do while in this position, both for his spiritual and for his carnal life.

"Therefore take no thought," it says in the Gospel in explanation of this law, "saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." And these are not mere words, but the explanation of man's true position in the world.

If a man only does what God wants of him, and fulfils His law, God, too, will do for him everything which he needs. Thus the law about doing unto others as we would that others should do unto us refers to God as well. For Him to do to us what we would that He should do to us, we must do for Him what He wants us to do. What He wants us to do is, that we should treat others as we would that others should treat us.

The only difference is this, that what He wants of us He does not need for Himself, but for ourselves, giving us the highest accessible good.

8

The working people must purify themselves, in order that the governments and the rich should stop devouring them.

The itch develops only on a dirty body, and feeds on that body only so long as it is dirty. And so, for the working people to free themselves from their wretchedness, there is but one means, — to purify themselves. But to purify themselves, they must free themselves from the theological, governmental, and scientific superstitions, and believe in God and His law.

In this does the one means of salvation lie.

Take an educated and a simple, unlettered working man. Both are full of indignation against the existing order of things. The educated working man does not believe in God or in His law, but knows Marx and Lassale, and watches the activity of a Bebel or a Jaurès in the parliaments, and delivers fine speeches about the injustice of the seizure of land, the implements of labour, against the hereditary transmission of property, and so forth.

The unlettered working man, though he does not know any theories, and believes in the Trinity, the redemption, and so forth, is also provoked against the landowners and capitalists, and considers the whole existing order to be wrong. But give a working man, either an educated or an uneducated one, the chance of improving his situation by producing some articles cheaper than others, though this may ruin tens, hundreds, thousands of his brothers, or the chance of taking with a rich man a place which gives him a big salary, or of buying land and himself starting an establishment with hired labour, and nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand will do so without hesitation, and will often defend their agrarian rights or the rights of the employers with even more zeal than landowners and capitalists who are to the manor born.

But that their participation in murder, that is, in military service or in the taxes which are intended for the support of the army, is not only a morally bad act, but

also very pernicious for their brothers and for themselves, — the same which forms the foundation of their slavery, — does not enter the heads of any of them, and all either gladly pay their taxes for the army, or themselves enter the army, considering such an act to be quite natural.

Could such people have led to the formation of a different society from that which now exists ?

The working people find the cause of their condition in the greed and cruelty of the landowners, capitalists, violators; but all, or nearly all, working people, without faith in God and His law, are just such, though much smaller, or unsuccessful, landowners, capitalists, and violators.

A village lad, being in want of earnings, comes to the city, to a peasant of his own village, who is acting as coachman at the house of a rich merchant, and asks the coachman to find a place for him at lower wages than what is customary. The village lad is prepared to take the place; upon arriving the next morning, he accidentally hears in the servants' room the complaints of the old man who has lost his place, and who does not know what to do next. The lad is sorry for the old man, and he refuses the place, because he does not want to do to another man what he does not want that others should do to him. Or a peasant, with a large family, accepts the well-paid place of steward on the estate of a rich and strict landowner. The new steward feels that his family is provided for, and is glad to take the place, but, upon beginning his duties, he has to mulct the peasants for permitting their horses to graze in their master's fields, to catch the women who are collecting fagots in their proprietor's forest, to lower the wages of the labourers and to make them exert their last bit of strength in work. And the steward who has taken this new place feels that his conscience does not permit him to busy himself with

these matters, and he gives up his place, and, in spite of the reproaches and complaints of his family, is left without a place, and does something else, which gives him much less of an income. Or again, a soldier is brought with a company against some rioting labourers and is commanded to shoot at them; he refuses to obey, and for this suffers cruel torments. All these men act so because the evil which they do to others is visible to them, and their heart tells them outright that what they are doing is contrary to the law of God about not doing to another what we would not that others should do to us. But when the working man knocks down the price of labour and does not see those to whom he does wrong, the evil which he causes his brothers through it is not diminished thereby. And when a working man goes over to the side of the masters, and does not see or feel the harm which he does his own, the harm none the less remains.

The same is true of a man who enters military service and who prepares himself, if necessary, to kill his brothers. If, upon entering military service, he does not yet see whom and how he is going to kill, when he learns to shoot and to stab, he must understand that he will have to kill people some day. And so, for the working people to free themselves from their oppression and slavery, they must educate in themselves a religious feeling, which forbids everything that makes the general position of their brothers worse, even though this deterioration may not be perceptible to them. They must religiously abstain, as now people abstain from eating pork or any other meat on fast-days, from working on Sundays, and so forth, in the first place, from working for capitalists, if they can get along at all without doing so; in the second place, from offering to do work at less than the established wage; thirdly, from improving their condition by passing over to the side of the capitalists, by serving them; and, fourthly, above all else, from participation in govern-

mental violence, — be it police, custom-house, or general military service.

Only by such a religious relation to the form of their activity can the working people be freed from their enslavement.

If a labourer is prepared from advantage or fear to agree to join the organized soldier murderers, without feeling the slightest compunction, if, for the increase of his well-being, he is prepared calmly to deprive his needy brother of his earnings, or for the sake of a salary to go over to the side of the oppressors, by helping them in their activity, — he has no cause for complaint.

No matter what his condition may be, he creates it himself and cannot himself be anything but an oppressed man or an oppressor.

Nor can it be different. So long as a man does not believe in God and His law, he cannot help but desire to get for himself in his short life as much good as possible, independently of what consequences this may have for others. And as soon as all men wish for themselves as much good as possible, independently of what this will do to others, no matter what order may be introduced, all men will form themselves into a cone, at the apex of which will be the rulers, and at the base the oppressed.

9

In the Gospel it says that Christ pitied men for being exhausted and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd.

What would He feel and say now, if He saw men not only exhausted and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd, but thousands of millions of men in the whole world, generation after generation, ruining themselves in beastly labour, in stupefaction, ignorance, vices, killing and tormenting one another, in spite of the fact that the

means of freeing oneself from all these calamities was given two thousand years ago?

The key which unlocks the lock of the chain that fetters the working masses is placed near them, and they needs only take the key, open the chain, and be free. But the labouring people have not been doing this; they either undertake nothing and surrender themselves to gloom, or wound their shoulders in tugging at the chain, in the hope of breaking the unbreakable chain, or, what is still worse, like a chained animal which rushes against him who wants to free it, attack those who show them the key which unlocks the lock of their chain.

This key is the belief in God and His law.

Only when men will reject those superstitions in which they are carefully brought up, will believe that the law about doing unto others as we would that others should do unto us is for our time the chief law of God, will believe in this, as they now believe in the celebration of the Sabbath, the observance of fasts, the necessity of divine services and communion, the fivefold prayers, or the fulfilment of the oath, and so forth, and, believing in this, will fulfil this law before any other laws and precepts, — will the slavery and the wretched condition of the working people be destroyed.

And so the working people themselves must first of all, without respect for the old habits and traditions and without fearing the external persecutions from church and state and the internal struggle with their relatives, with boldness and determination free themselves from the false faith in which they are educated, more and more elucidate to themselves and to others, especially to the younger generations and to children, the essence of the faith in God and of the law of mutuality which results from it, and follow it to the best of their ability, though this following may present a temporary discomfiture.

Thus must the working people themselves act.

But the men of the ruling minority, who, making use of the labours of the working people, have acquired all the advantages of culture and so are able clearly to see the deceptions in which they keep the working people, if they truly wish to serve the working people, must first of all with their example and by their words try to free the working people from those religious and governmental deceptions in which they are entrapped, and must not do what they are doing now, when, by leaving in force, supporting, and even strengthening with their example these deceptions, especially the chief, the religious deceptions, they offer ineffective and even injurious medicines, which not only do not free the working people from their wretchedness, but even make their condition worse and worse.

No one can tell, whether this will ever or anywhere be realized. One thing is certain, and that is, that this means can free a vast number of men — all working people — from their humiliations and sufferings.

There is and there can be no other means.

Yásnaya Polyána, July 12, 1901.

"THE SOLDIERS' MEMENTO"

1901

"THE SOLDIERS' MEMENTO"

Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Matt. x. 26–28).

Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men (Acts v. 29).

You are a soldier, you have been taught to shoot, stab, march, go through gymnastic exercises, read books, and have been taken out to military exercises and parades; maybe you went through a war, fighting the Turks or the Chinese, doing everything you were commanded to do. It did not even occur to you to ask yourself whether what you were doing was good or bad.

But here the command is given to your company or squadron to start out, taking along ball-cartridges. You travel or march, without asking whither you are taken.

You are led up to a village or factory, and you see from afar that in the open square there is a crowd of villagers or factory hands, men, women with their children, old men and women. The governor and the prosecutor, accompanied by policemen, walk up to the crowd and talk to the people about something. The crowd is at first silent, then the people begin to cry out louder and louder, and the officials go away from the crowd. You see that

these are peasants or factory hands who are riotous, and that you are brought there to pacify them. The officials several times walk up to the people and walk away again, but the shouts grow louder and louder, and the officials talk among themselves, and you are commanded to load your gun with a ball-cartridge. You see before yourself people, the same from among whom you were taken: men in sleeveless coats, short fur coats, bast shoes, and women in kerchiefs and waists, just such women as your wife or mother.

The first shot you are ordered to fire above the heads of the crowd; but the people do not disperse, and shout louder than before. Then you are commanded to shoot right, not over their heads, but straight into the crowd.

You have been impressed with the idea that you are not responsible for what will happen from your shot; but you know that the man who, weltering in blood, fell down from your shot was killed by you and by no one else, and you know that you might not have shot, and then the man would not have been killed.

What are you to do?

It is not enough for you to drop your gun and refuse just now to shoot at your brothers. To-morrow the same may be repeated, and so, whether you wish it or not, you must bethink yourself and ask yourself what this calling of a soldier is, which has brought you to such a state that you are compelled to shoot at your own unarmed brothers.

In the Gospel it says that we must not only not kill our brothers, but must also not do what leads to murder, that we must not be angry with our brother, and that we must not hate our enemies, but love them.

In the law of Moses it says distinctly, "Thou shalt not kill," without any explanations as to who may be killed and who not. But in the rules which you have been taught it says that a soldier must fulfil any command of

his superior, no matter what it may be, except a command against the Tsar, and in the explanation of the sixth commandment it says that, though the commandment forbids killing, he who kills in war does not sin against this commandment.[1] But in the *Soldiers' Memento*, which hangs in every barrack and which you have read and heard many a time, it says that a soldier must kill men: "Three fly at you, — the first you stab, the second you shoot, the third you settle with the bayonet . . . if the bayonet is broken, beat with the butt; if the butt won't do, belabour him with your fists; if your fists give out, hang to him with your teeth."[2]

You are told that you must kill, because you have taken the oath, and that the authorities, and not you, will be responsible for your acts.

But before you swore, that is, promised people to do their will, you were even without an oath obliged in everything to do the will of God, of Him who gave you life, — but God has commanded us not to kill.

Thus you could not swear that you would do *everything* demanded of you by men. For this reason it says directly in the Gospel (Matt. v. 34), "Swear not at all" . . . "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." And the same is said in James v. 12: "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by earth," etc. Thus the oath itself is a sin. And what they say to the effect that not you, but the authorities,

[1] In the Rules it says: "By the sixth commandment God forbids us to take the lives of men by violence or cunning, or in any way to violate the security and peace of our neighbour, and so by this commandment quarrels, anger, hatred, envy, and cruelty are also forbidden. But he who kills the enemy in war does not sin against this commandment, because by war he defends our faith, our Tsar, and our country." — *Author's Note.*

[2] *Soldiers'* *Memento*, collected by Dragomírov, 19th ed., St. Petersburg, 1899.

will be responsible for your acts is an untruth. Can your conscience be, not in yourself, but in the corporal, sergeant, captain, colonel, or anybody else? Nobody can decide for you what you can and must do, and what you cannot and must not do. A man is always responsible for what he does. Is not the sin of adultery many times lighter than the sin of murder, and can a man say to another, "Commit adultery, I take your sin upon myself, because I am your superior"?

Adam, so the Bible tells, sinned against God and then said that his wife had told him to eat the apple, that the devil had tempted her. God justified neither Adam nor Eve, and told them that Adam would be punished for having listened to the voice of his wife, and that his wife would be likewise punished for having obeyed the serpent. He did not free them, but punished them. Will not God say the same to you, when you kill a man and say that your captain commanded you to do so?

The deception is seen even in this, that in the rule which says that a soldier must fulfil all the commandments of his superiors, the words are added: "Except such as are to the harm of the Tsar."

If a soldier, before fulfilling the commands of his superior, must decide whether they are not against the Tsar, how much more must he, before fulfilling the command of his superior, consider whether what his officer demands of him is not against the highest Tsar, God! But there is no act which is more opposed to God's will than the killing of men. And so it is not right to obey men, if they command you to kill men. But if you obey and kill, you do so only for your advantage, in order not to be punished. Thus, by killing by the command of your superiors, you are as much a murderer as that robber who kills a merchant, in order to rob him. The robber is tempted by the money, and you are tempted by the

desire not to be punished and to receive a reward. A man always himself answers for his acts before God.

No power can, as the authorities want it to, make of you, of a living man, a dead thing which may be handled as desired. Christ taught men that they are all sons of God, and so a Christian cannot give his conscience into the power of another man, no matter by what title he may be called, — king, Tsar, or emperor. The fact that the men who have taken the command over you demand of you that you shall kill your brothers, proves only that these men are cheats and that, therefore, you must not obey them. Shameful is the position of the harlot who is always prepared to have her body defiled by him who is pointed out to her by her master; but more shameful is the position of the soldier who is always prepared to commit the greatest crime, — to murder any man who is pointed out to him by his superior.

And so, if you really want to act in godly fashion, you must do this: you must give up the disgraceful and godless calling of a soldier and be prepared to bear all the sufferings which they will impose upon you for this.

Thus the real memento of a Christian soldier is not the one in which it says that "God is the soldiers' general," and other blasphemies, and that "a soldier must, while obeying his superiors in everything, be prepared to kill strangers or friends, even his unarmed brothers;" he must remember the words of Scripture that God must be obeyed more than men, and he must not fear those who can kill the body, but cannot kill the soul.[1]

In this consists the true soldiers' memento, which does not deceive.

Gáspra, December 7, 1901.

[1] In Dragomírov's *Memento* three passages are adduced from the Gospel, — John xv., Matt. x. 22, and 39. From John, verse 13 is quoted: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," apparently in this sense, that the soldiers

must in a battle fight most desperately, in order to defend their comrades.

But these words in no way refer to military matters, but have the very opposite meaning. In verses 10–13 it says: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Thus the words, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," do not at all mean that a soldier must defend his comrades, but that a Christian must be prepared to lay down his life for the fulfilment of Christ's commandments about this, that men should love one another, and so must be prepared to sacrifice his life, rather than to kill men.

From Matthew, the end of verse 22 of Chap. X. is quoted, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved," apparently in this sense, that a soldier who will fight bravely will be saved from the enemy. Again the meaning of this passage is the very opposite of the one which the author wants to give to it.

The whole verse runs as follows: "And ye shall be hated by all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."

Thus it is obvious that this verse cannot have reference to the soldiers: the soldiers are not hated by any one in the name of Christ, and so it is clear that only those men who decline in the name of Christ to do what the world demands of them are those who are hated in the name of Christ, and in the present case these are the soldiers who do not obey, when they are commanded to kill.

Again there is quoted the end of Matt. x. 39, "He that loseth his life shall find it," again in this sense, that he who shall be killed in war will receive his reward in heaven. But the meaning is obviously not that. In verse 38 it says, "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." And only after that is added, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it," that is, that he who for the sake of fulfilling the teaching of love shall save his carnal life, will lose his true life, while he who, for the sake of fulfilling the teaching, does not save his carnal life, will attain the true, spiritual, everlasting life.

And so the three passages do not say, as the author wants them to, that, in obeying the authorities, it is necessary to fight, beat, and chew men, but, on the contrary, all three passages, like the Gospel in general, say one and the same thing, that a Christian cannot be a murderer and, therefore, a soldier. And so the words, "A soldier is Christ's warrior," placed in the *Memento* after the Gospel verses, do not mean at all what the author thinks. Indeed, a soldier, if he is a Christian, can and must be Christ's warrior, but he will be Christ's warrior, not when, obeying the will of his superiors, who have pre-

pared him for murder, he shall kill unarmed men, but only when in the name of Christ he will refuse to follow the godless and disgraceful calling of a soldier. And he will war, not upon foreign enemies, but upon his superiors who are deceiving him and his brothers, and he will not fight with the bayonet, or with fist, or teeth, but will in humble reasonableness and readiness prefer to suffer all kinds of sufferings and even death, rather than remain a soldier, that is, a man who is prepared to kill those who are pointed out to him by his superiors. — *Author's Note.*

"THE OFFICERS' MEMENTO"

1901

"THE OFFICERS' MEMENTO"

> But, whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.
>
> Wo unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh! (Matt. xviii. 6, 7.)

In all soldier quarters there hangs upon the wall a so-called *Soldiers' Memento,* composed by General Dragomírov. This *Memento* is a conglomeration of stupid, slangy, supposedly popular words (though they are quite foreign to any soldier), mixed with blasphemous quotations from the Gospel. Gospel sayings are adduced in confirmation of the statement that the soldiers must kill and chew their enemies: "If the bayonet is broken, fight with your fists; if your fists give out, hang on with your teeth." At the end of the *Memento* it says that God is the soldiers' general.

Nothing proves more conclusively than this *Memento* to what a terrible degree of ignorance, slavish obedience, and bestiality our Russians have come. Ever since this most terrible blasphemy has made its appearance and was hung up in all the barracks, — and this was done very long ago, — not one chief, not one priest, who, one would think, would directly be affected by the distortion of the meaning of the Gospel texts, has expressed his condemnation of this disgusting production, and it con-

tinues to be printed in millions of copies and to be read by millions of soldiers, who accept this terrible work as a guide in their activity.

This *Memento* long ago roused my indignation, and now, fearing that I shall not be able to do so again before my death, I have written an address to the soldiers, in which I try to remind them that, as men and Christians, they have quite different obligations before God than those which are put forth in this *Memento*. Such a reminder, I think, is not only necessary for the soldiers, but to an even greater degree for the officerdom (by officerdom I mean all the military authorities, from the ensign to the general), which enters military service or remains in it, not from compulsion, like the soldiers, but from choice. This reminder, it seems to me, is particularly needed in our time.

It was all very well one hundred or fifty years ago, when war was considered to be an inevitable condition of the life of nations, when the men belonging to the nation with which war was waged were considered barbarians, infidels, or malefactors, and when it did not even occur to the military that they would be needed for the suppression and pacification of their own nations, — it was all very well then for a man to put on a bright-coloured, lace-covered uniform, to walk, causing the sabre to rattle and the spurs to tinkle, or to let his horse go through evolutions in front of the regiment, imagining that he was a hero who, if he had not yet sacrificed, was prepared to sacrifice his life in the defence of his country. But now, when the frequent international relations — mercantile, social, scientific, artistic — have so brought the nations together that any war among the modern nations presents itself in the form of a family dissension which violates the most sacred ties of men; when hundreds of peace societies and thousands of articles, not only in special periodicals, but also in the general newspapers, never cease

in every manner possible to make clear the madness of militarism and the possibility, even the necessity, of abolishing war; when, and this is the most important thing of all, the military have more and more frequently to proceed, not against a foreign enemy, in order to defend the country against attacking conquerors or to increase the country's glory and power, but against unarmed factory hands and peasants, — the galloping on a steed, in a lace-bedecked uniform, and the dandyish appearance in front of the company no longer is a case of trifling, pardonable ambition, which it used to be formerly, but something quite different.

In olden times, say in the days of Nicholas I., it never as much as occurred to any one that the armies were needed preëminently for the purpose of shooting unarmed citizens. But now troops are regularly quartered in the capitals and manufacturing centres, so as to be ready to disperse working men, and hardly a month passes but that the troops are taken out of their barracks with their ball-cartridges and are located in a protected place, ready at any moment to shoot at the masses.

The use of the army against the masses has not only become a customary phenomenon, but the troops are in advance formed in such a way as to be ready for such emergencies. The government does not conceal the fact that the distribution of recruits according to districts is intentionally made in such a way that the soldiers are never drafted from the localities where they are quartered. This is done so as to avoid the necessity of having the soldiers shoot at their own parents.

The Emperor of Germany has said plainly at every levy of recruits (his speech of May 23, 1901) that the soldiers swearing allegiance to him belong to him, body and soul, and that they have but one enemy, and that is, his enemy, and that his enemies are the socialists (that is, the working people), whom the soldiers must, if com-

manded, shoot down ("*niederschiessen*"), even though these be their own brothers or even parents.

Besides, if in former times the troops were used against the masses, those against whom they were used were, or at least were supposed to be, malefactors, ready to ruin and kill peaceful citizens, who, therefore, had to be destroyed for the common good. But now everybody knows that those against whom the troops are sent out are for the most part peaceable, industrious people, who merely desire without interference to enjoy the fruits of their labours. Thus the chief and constant use of troops in our time no longer consists in an imaginary defence against infidel and in general foreign enemies, nor against riotous malefactors, domestic enemies, but in killing their unarmed brothers, who are not all malefactors, but peaceable, industrious people, who only do not wish to have what they earn taken away from them. Thus military service in our time, when its chief purpose is by the threat of killing and by murder itself to retain the enslaved people in those unjust conditions in which they are, is no longer a noble, but a despicable business.

And so it is necessary for the officers who are now serving to think about whom they are serving, and to ask themselves whether what they are doing is good or bad.

I know there are many officers, especially among the higher ranks, who by all kinds of reflections on the subject of Orthodoxy, autocracy, integrity of the state, the inevitableness of imminent war, the need of order, the senselessness of the socialistic ravings, and so forth, try to prove to themselves that their activity is rational and useful, and has nothing immoral about it. But in the depth of their hearts they themselves do not believe in what they say, and the more sensible and the older they are, the less do they believe in it.

I remember how pleasantly I was surprised by my

friend and comrade in the service, a very ambitious man, who had devoted all his life to military service and had attained the highest ranks and distinctions (he was an adjutant-general and a general of artillery), when he told me that he had burned his memoirs on the wars in which he had taken part, because he had changed his view on military matters and now considered every war a bad business, which ought not to be encouraged by busying oneself with it, but, on the contrary, ought in every way possible to be discredited. Many officers believe the same thing, though they do not say so, while they serve. In fact, no thinking officer can think differently. We need but think what, beginning with the lowest ranks and ending with the highest, that of a commander of a corps, constitutes the occupation of all the officers. From the beginning to the end of their service, — I am speaking of the officers in active service, — their activity, with the exception of rare, short periods, when they go to war and are busy with murder, consists in the attainment of two ends, — in instructing the soldiers in the best possible way to kill men and in teaching them such obedience that they will be able mechanically, without any reflection, to do what their chief may demand of them. In olden times they used to say, "flog two unmercifully and get one well instructed," and so they did. If now the percentage of flogged is less, the principle remains the same. People cannot be brought to that animal and even mechanical condition, when they will do what is most repugnant to their natures and the faith professed by them, namely, murder, at the command of any superior, unless not only cunning deception but even most cruel violence has been practised against them. And so it is done.

Lately a great sensation was created in the French press by the disclosure of some journalists as to the terrible tortures practised on the soldiers of the disciplinary

battalions in the island of Obrou, within six hours' travel from Paris. The persons punished had their arms and legs tied together behind their backs and were thrown on the floor, screws were put on the thumbs of the hands, which were bent behind their backs, and these screws were so tightened that every motion produced excruciating pain, men were suspended by their legs, and so forth.

When we see trained animals performing what is contrary to their natures, — dogs walking on their fore legs, elephants whirling barrels, tigers playing with lions, and so forth, — we know that all this has been obtained by tortures, by means of hunger, the whip, and the hot iron. We know the same when we see men, in uniforms and with their guns, stand stark still, or go through the same motion with absolute regularity, run, jump, shoot, shout, and so forth, in general execute those beautiful parades and manœuvres, which the emperors and kings admire so much and brag of to one another. It is impossible to drive everything human out of a man and to bring him to the condition of a machine, without torturing him, not in a simple way, but in the most refined and cruel manner, both torturing and deceiving him.

All this you officers do. In this, with the rare exceptions when you go to war, does your service, from the highest to the lowest ranks, consist.

To you comes a youth who is taken away from his family and is settled at the opposite end of the world, and who is impressed with the idea that the deceptive oath, forbidden by the Gospel, which he has taken, binds him irretrievably, just as a cock placed on the floor, on which a chalk-line is drawn from his beak, imagines that he is tied with this line. He comes to you with full humility and with the hope that you, the elders, who are wiser and more learned than he, will teach him everything that is good. But you, instead of freeing him from those super-

stitions which he has brought with him, inoculate in him new, most senseless, coarse, and harmful superstitions: about the sacredness of the flag, the almost divine significance of the Tsar, the duty of submitting without a murmur to the authorities. When, with the aid of methods worked out in your business for the stultification of men, you bring him to a condition worse than that of an animal, in which he is ready to kill anybody he is commanded to kill, even his unarmed brothers, you proudly show him to the higher power and receive thanks and rewards for this. It is terrible for a man to be a murderer himself, but by means of cunning and cruel methods to bring to this his brothers who confide in him is a most terrible crime. And this you are committing, and in this does your service consist.

So it is not surprising that among you, more than in any other circle, flourish all those things which can drown conscience, — smoking, cards, drunkenness, debauchery, — and that more frequently than anywhere else occur suicides.

"It must be that offences come into the world; but woe to them by whom the offences come."

You frequently say that you serve, because, if you did not serve, the existing order would be impaired and there would be disorder and all kinds of calamities.

But, in the first place, it is not true that you are concerned about the maintenance of the existing order: you are only concerned about your personal advantage.

In the second place, even if your refraining from doing military service should impair the existing order, this would not at all prove that you must continue to do what is bad, but only that the order which will be destroyed through your abstinence ought to be destroyed. Even if there existed the most useful institutions, such as hospitals, schools, homes for the aged, which would be maintained from the revenue derived from houses of pros-

titution, all the usefulness of these charitable institutions could not keep in her condition a woman who should wish to free herself from her disgraceful calling.

"It is not my fault," the woman would say, "that you have established your charitable institutions on debauchery. I do not want to be a harlot, and with your institutions I have nothing to do." The same ought to be said by every military man, when he is told of the necessity of maintaining the existing order, which is based on the readiness to commit murder. "Establish a general order, such that murder will not be necessary for it," is what a military man should say, "and I will not violate it. I simply do not want to be a murderer."

Many others of you say: "I was educated that way, I am fettered by my position, and I cannot get out of it." But even that is not true.

You can always get out of your position. If you do not, it is because you prefer to live and act against your conscience, rather than lose some of the worldly advantages which you derive from your dishonourable calling. Only forget that you are officers and remember that you are men, and the way out from your condition will at once present itself to you. This way out, the best and most honourable, consists in this, that you call together the part which you command, step to the front, beg the soldiers' pardon for the wrong which you have done them by deceiving them, and stop being a military man. This act seems very bold and seems to call for much courage; and yet, much less courage is needed in this act than in storming a fort or challenging to a duel for an insult to your uniform, — what you are always ready to do and always do in your capacity as a military man.

But even if you are not able to act in this manner, you are still able, if you have come to understand the criminality of military service, to leave that service and prefer

any other activity to it, even though it be less advantageous.

But if you are not able to do even that, the solution of the question as to whether you will continue to serve will be put off for you until the time — and this time will soon arrive for everybody — when you shall stand face to face with an unarmed crowd of peasants or factory hands, and you shall be commanded to shoot at them. And then if any human feeling is left in you, you will be compelled to refuse to obey and in consequence of this will certainly leave the service.

I know there are many officers still, from the highest to the lowest ranks, who are so ignorant or so hypnotized that they do not see the necessity of any of these three conclusions, and calmly continue to serve and under the present conditions are prepared to shoot at their brothers and are even proud of the fact; fortunately, public opinion more and more punishes these men with contempt and loathing, and their number is growing less and less.

Thus in our time, when the fratricidal purpose of the army has become obvious, it is impossible for the officers to continue the ancient traditions of the military self-satisfied bravado; they cannot even, without recognizing their human degradation and shame, continue the criminal business of teaching simple people who have faith in them how to commit murder, and themselves be ready to take part in the murder of unarmed men.

It is this that every thinking and conscientious officer of our time should understand and remember.

Gáspra, December 7, 1901.

INTRODUCTION TO W. VON POLENZ'S "DER BÜTTNER-BAUER"

1902

INTRODUCTION TO W. VON POLENZ'S "DER BÜTTNER-BAUER"

LAST year an acquaintance of mine, in whose taste I have confidence, gave me a German novel, Von Polenz's *Der Büttnerbauer*, to read. I read it, and I was surprised to find that this production, which appeared about two years ago, was almost unknown to people.

This novel is not one of those imitations of artistic productions which are in our time produced in such enormous quantities, but a real artistic production. This novel does not belong to those descriptions of events and persons, which present no interest whatever and which are artificially connected among themselves for no other reason than that the author, having learned how to handle the technique of artistic descriptions, wishes to write a new novel; nor to those dissertations on a given theme, which, clothed in the form of a drama or a novel, also pass in our time among the reading public for artistic productions; nor to those productions, called decadent, which particularly please the modern public for the very reason that, resembling the raving of a maniac, they are something of the nature of rebuses, the guessing of which forms a pleasant occupation and at the same time is considered to be a sign of refinement.

This novel does not belong to any of these, but is a really artistic production, in which the author tells what he must tell, because he loves that of which he tells, and does not speak with reflections, with hazy allegories, but by the simple means with which artistic contents can be rendered, by poetic pictures, — not fantastic, unusual, incomprehensible pictures, which are united without any inner necessity, but by the representation of the most ordinary, simple persons and events, which are united among themselves by an inner artistic necessity.

This novel is not merely a real artistic production; it is also a beautiful artistic production, uniting in the highest degree all the three important conditions of a really good production of art.

In the first place, its contents are important, in that they deal with the life of the peasantry, that is, the majority of men, who stand at the basis of every social structure and who in our time are passing, not only in Germany, but also in all the other European countries, through a grave change of their ancient structure of centuries. (It is remarkable that almost simultaneously with the *Büttnerbauer* there has appeared a French novel, Réné Bazin's *La Terre Qui Meurt*, which deals with the same subject; it is quite good, though less artistic than the *Büttnerbauer*.)

In the second place, this novel is written with great mastery, in a beautiful German, which is particularly powerful, when the author makes his characters speak in the coarse, manly Plattdeutsch of the labouring classes.

And, in the third place, this novel is all permeated with love for those men whom the author lets act.

In one of the chapters, for example, we have a description of a man who, after a night passed in drunkenness with his companions, early in the morning returns home and knocks at the door. His wife looks out of the window and recognizes him; she showers him with curses and is

intentionally slow in letting him in. When, at last, she opens the door for him, he rolls into the house and wants to go to the large living-room, but his wife does not allow him to go there, lest the children should see their drunken father, and she pushes him back. But he takes hold of the door-posts, and struggles with her. Though he is usually a peaceable man, he now suddenly gets irritated (the cause of the irritation is this, that on the previous day she took the money given to him by some gentlemen out of his pocket and hid it), and in his madness throws himself upon her and, seizing her by her hair, demands his money.

"I will not give it to you, never!" she replies to his demands, trying to free herself from him.

"I'll die, but I won't give it to you!" she says.

"You will!" he yells, knocking her off her feet. He falls upon her, and continues to demand his money. Receiving no answer, he in his drunken fit of anger wants to strangle her. But the sight of blood which runs down her brow and nose from underneath her hair arrests him: he feels terribly at what he has done, and he stops beating her and, tottering, reaches his bed, where he falls down.

The scene is true and terrible. But the author loves his heroes and adds one small detail, which suddenly illumines everything with such a bright ray of light that he makes the reader not only pity, but even love these men, in spite of all their coarseness and cruelty. The beaten wife comes to her senses, gets up from the floor, wipes her bloody head with the lower part of her skirt, feels her limbs, and, opening the door to the room in which are her crying children, quiets them, and then seeks her husband with her eyes. He is lying on his bed just as he fell down upon it, but his head is hanging down from the head of the bed and is filling with blood. His wife walks over to him, carefully raises his head, and puts it

on the pillow, and only then adjusts her clothes and detaches a handful of hair which has been pulled out.

Dozens of pages of discussions will not tell everything that is told by this detail. Here the consciousness, educated by tradition, of conjugal duty, and the triumph of the set determination not to give up the money, which not she, but the family needs, are at once revealed to the reader; here also we have the offence, and the forgiveness for the beating, and pity, and, if not love, at least the recollection of the love for the husband, the father of her children. But that is not all. Such a detail, by throwing a light on the inner life of this woman and this man, at the same time illuminates for the reader the inner life of millions of such husbands and wives, of those who have lived before and who live now; it not only inspires respect and love for these people who are crushed by work, but also makes us stop and wonder why it is that these physically and spiritually strong people, with such possibilities of a good life of love, are so neglected, so crushed, and so ignorant.

Such truly artistic features, which are revealed only through the love of the author for what he writes about, may be found in every chapter of the novel.

This novel is unquestionably a beautiful production of art, as all those who read it will agree. And yet this novel appeared three years ago, and, though it was translated in Russia in the *Messenger of Europe*, it has passed unnoticed, both in Russia and in Germany. I have lately asked several literary Germans whom I have met about this novel, — they had heard Polenz's name, but had not read his novel, though they had all read Zola's last novels, and Kipling's stories, and Ibsen's dramas, and D'Annunzio, and even Maeterlinck.

About twenty years ago Matthew Arnold wrote a beautiful article on the purpose of criticism. According to his opinion, it is the purpose of criticism to find what

is most important and good in any book whatever, wherever and whenever written, and to direct the reader's attention to what is important and good in them.

Such a criticism not only seems to me indispensable in our time, when people are deluged with newspapers, periodicals, and books, and when advertising has been so widely developed, but on whether such criticism will make its appearance and will gain authority does the whole future of the enlightenment of the whole cultured class of our European world depend.

The overproduction of any article is harmful; but the overproduction of articles which do not form an end, but a means, when people regard this means as an end, is particularly harmful.

Horses and carriages, as means of transportation, garments and houses, as means of protection against the changes of weather, good food, as a means for the preservation of the strength of the organism, are very useful. But the moment men begin to look upon possession of the means as an end, considering it good to have as many horses, houses, garments, and articles of food as possible, these articles become, not only useless, but absolutely harmful. This fate befell printing also in the well-to-do circle of men of our European society. Printing, which is unquestionably useful for the vast masses of the little educated, has in the midst of the well-to-do people for a long time served as the chief instrument for the diffusion of ignorance, and not of enlightenment.

It is very easy to become convinced of this. Books, periodicals, especially the newspapers, have in our time become great financial undertakings, for the success of which the largest possible number of purchasers are needed. Now the interests and tastes of the largest possible number of purchasers are always low and vulgar, and so, for the success of the productions of the press, it is necessary that the productions should respond to the

demands of the great majority of the purchasers, that is, that they should touch upon the low interests and correspond to the vulgar tastes. The press fully satisfies these demands, which it is quite able to do, since among the number of workers for the press there are many more people with the same low interests and vulgar tastes as the public, than men with high interests and a refined taste. And since, with the diffusion of printing and the commercial methods used with periodicals, newspapers, and books, these people receive good pay for their productions, which supply the demands of the masses, there results that terrible, ever growing and growing deluge of printed paper, which by its mass alone, to say nothing of the harm of its contents, forms a vast obstacle to enlightenment.

If in our time a bright man from among the masses, who wants to educate himself, have access to all books, periodicals, and newspapers, and be allowed to choose his own reading, all the chances are that in the course of ten years, reading assiduously every day, he will be reading nothing but foolish and immoral books. It is as unlikely that he will strike a good book as it would be to find a marked pea in a bushel of peas. The worst thing about it is this, that reading nothing but poor works, he will more and more corrupt his understanding and taste. Thus, if he does strike upon some good work, he will either not understand it at all or will understand it perversely.

Besides, thanks to accident or to masterly advertising, certain poor productions, like Hall Caine's *The Christian*, a novel which is false in contents and not at all artistic, and of which a million copies were sold, obtain, like Odol and Pear's Soap, great popularity, which is not justified by their merits. This great popularity makes an ever increasing number of men read these books, and the fame of an insignificant and frequently harmful

book keeps growing and growing like a snowball, and in the heads of the vast majority of men, again like a snowball, there is formed a greater and ever greater confusion of ideas, and an absolute inability to comprehend the value of literary productions. And so, in proportion as the newspapers, periodicals, and books — printing in general — become more and more disseminated, the level of the value of what is printed falls lower and lower, and the great mass of the so-called cultured public sinks more and more into a most hopeless, self-satisfied, and, so, incorrigible ignorance.

Within my memory, in the period of fifty years, there has taken place this striking lowering of the taste and common sense of the reading public. This lowering may be followed out in all the branches of literature, but I will point out only the most perceptible examples, as known to me. In Russian poetry, for example, after Púshkin and Lérmontov (Tyútchev is generally forgotten), the poetic fame passes at first to the doubtful poets Máykov, Polónski, Fet, then to Nekrásov, who is entirely devoid of the poetic gift, then to the artificial and prosaic versifier Aleksyéy Tolstóy, then to the monotonous, weak Nádson, then to the absolutely untalented Apúkhtin, then everything becomes mixed, and there appear versifiers, and their name is legion, who do not even know what poetry is or what that which they write means or why they write.

Another striking example is that of the English prose writers: from the great Dickens we descend, at first, to George Eliot, then to Thackeray, from Thackeray to Trollope, and then begins the indifferent manufactures of a Kipling, Hall Caine, Rider Haggard, and so forth. Still more striking is this in American literature: after the great galaxy, — Emerson, Thoreau, Lowell, Whittier, and others, suddenly everything breaks off, and there appear beautiful editions with beautiful illustrations and with

beautiful stories, and novels, which it is impossible to read on account of the absence of any and all contents.

In our time the ignorance of the cultured crowd has reached such a pass that all the really great thinkers, poets, prose writers, both of antiquity and of the nineteenth century, are considered obsolete, and no longer satisfy the high and refined demands of the new men; all that they look upon either with contempt or with a condescending smile. As the last word of philosophy is in our time regarded the immoral, coarse, inflated, disconnected babbling of Nietzsche; the senseless, artificial conglomeration of words of all kinds of decadent poems, which are held together by rhyme and measure, are regarded as poetry of the highest calibre; in all the theatres they give dramas, the meaning of which is not known to any one, not even to the author, and novels which have no contents and no artistic merit are printed in editions of a million copies and are distributed under the guise of artistic productions.

"What shall I read, in order to complete my education?" asks a young man or girl, who has finished at a higher institution of learning.

The same is asked by a literate man from the masses, who can understand what he reads and who is searching after real enlightenment.

To answer such questions it is naturally not sufficient to make a naïve attempt at interrogating prominent men as to what books they consider to be the best.

Nor is one aided by the subdivision of writers into classes, tacitly accepted by European society, of the first, second, third, fourth order, and so forth, — of geniuses, very talented, talented, and simply good writers. Such a subdivision does not help us in a true comprehension of the merits of literature and in the discovery of what is good amidst a sea of what is bad, and even bothers us in it. To say nothing of the fact that such a division into

classes is very frequently incorrect and maintains itself only because it was made long ago and is accepted by all, such a division is harmful, because very mediocre things will be found among the authors considered first class, while most excellent things may be found in the authors of the last division. Thus a man who will believe in the division of the authors into classes, and that in a first-class author everything is beautiful, and in the authors of a lower class or in those who are entirely unknown everything is weak, will only get mixed up in his comprehension and will lose much which is truly useful and truly enlightening.

Nothing but the true criticism can answer the most important question of our time of the youth of the cultured class, in search of culture, or of the men of the masses, in search of enlightenment. Not the criticism which now exists and which sets itself the task of lauding productions that have gained popularity and of discovering justificatory or hazy philosophico-æsthetic theories for these productions, nor the criticism which busies itself with more or less wittily ridiculing poor productions or the works from a hostile camp, and still less the criticism which has flourished in our country and which sets itself the task from the types represented in a few authors to determine the direction of the motion of all society, or in general, *à propos* of the literary productions, to express their economic and political ideas.

The answer to this vastly important question as to what we shall read out of the mass that is written can be given only by the true criticism, the one which, as Matthew Arnold says, will make it its aim to bring to the front and point out to men everything which is best, both in past and in present writers.

On this, whether such a criticism will appear or not, an unselfish criticism, belonging to no party, understanding and loving art, and whether its authority will be

established with sufficient firmness to overcome the financial advertisements, does in my opinion depend the solution of the question as to whether the last rays of enlightenment in our so-called cultured European society will perish, without extending to the masses, or whether the enlightenment will be regenerated, as it was regenerated in the Middle Ages, and whether it will extend to the majority of the masses, who now are deprived of all enlightenment.

The ignorance of the public as to the beautiful novel of Polenz, as well as to many other good productions, which are drowned in a sea of printed trash, while senseless, trifling, and simply nasty productions of literature are discussed on all sides, invariably praised and disseminated in millions of copies, has evoked these thoughts in me, and I seize upon the opportunity, which will hardly present itself again to me, to express them, if only briefly.

ON RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

1902

ON RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

1

In Russia there exist missionaries whose duty it is to convert all the non-Orthodox to Orthodoxy.

Toward the end of 1901 a congress of these missionaries assembled in the city of Orél, and at the end of this congress the government marshal of nobility, Mr. Stakhóvich, delivered a speech in which he proposed to the congress to recognize full liberty of conscience, meaning by these words, as he expressed it, not only liberty of belief, but also liberty of profession of faith, which includes the liberty of defection from Orthodoxy and even converting people to faiths not in agreement with Orthodoxy. Mr. Stakhóvich assumed that such a liberty could only contribute to the triumph and dissemination of Orthodoxy, of which he recognized himself as being a believing professor.

The members of the congress did not agree to Mr. Stakhóvich's proposition and did not even discuss it. Later on there began a lively exchange of ideas and a discussion as to whether the Christian church should be tolerant or not: some, the majority of the Orthodox, both clerical and lay, expressed themselves in newspapers and periodicals against toleration, and, for one reason or another, recognized the impossibility of stopping the persecutions against the dissenting members of the church; others, the minority, agreed with Stakhóvich's opinion, approved of it, and argued the desirability and even the

necessity for the church of recognizing liberty of conscience.

Those who dissented from Mr. Stakhóvich's opinion said that the church, which gave the everlasting good to men, could not fail to use all the means at its command for the salvation of its unreasoning members from eternal perdition, and that one of these means were the barriers set by the temporal power against defection from the true church and the conversion of its members. Above all things, they said, the church, which received from God the power to bind and loose, always knows what it is doing whenever it uses violence against its enemies.

But the discussions of laymen about the regularity or irregularity of its measures only show the delusions of laymen who permit themselves to discuss the actions of the infallible church.

Thus spoke and always speak the opponents of toleration.

But its advocates assert that it is unjust by force to prevent the profession of faiths which dissent from Orthodoxy, and that the subdivision made by the adversaries of toleration between belief and external profession of faith was without foundation, since every belief inevitably finds an expression in external actions.

Besides, they said, for the true church, which has Christ at its head, and His promise that no one shall overcome His church, there can be no danger from the profession of the lie by a small number of heretics or dissenters, the more so, since the persecutions themselves do not attain their end, for the reason that martyrdom only weakens the moral authority of the persecuting church, and increases the power of the persecuted.

2

The advocates of toleration say that the church must in no case use violence against its dissenting members

and against those who profess different faiths. The church must not use violence! But here involuntarily arises the question: How can the church use violence?

The Christian church, by the definition which it gives itself, is a society of men, established by God, which has for its aim the transmission to men of the true faith, which saves them in this world and in the world to come.

How, then, can such a society of men, who have for their instruments grace and the sermon, wish for violence and actually exert it against people who do not accept their belief?

To advise the church not to persecute men who dissent from it or convert its members, is the same as advising an academy of learned men not to persecute, punish, deport, and so forth, those people who do not agree with their opinions. An academy of learned men cannot wish for such things, and if it did, it cannot do so, because it has no instruments with which to do it.

What, then, signify those persecutions which since the time of Constantine have been employed by the Christian church and which the advocates of religious toleration advise the church to put a stop to?

3

Mr. Stakhóvich, quoting in his speech Guizot's words about the necessity for liberty of conscience for the Christian religion, after these good and clear words of Guizot adduces the bad and confused words of Aksákov, who substitutes the concept of "church" for that of "Christian religion," and, having made this substitution, tries to prove the possibility and necessity of religious toleration for the Christian church. But Christian religion and Christian church are not one and the same thing, and we have no right whatever to assume that what is proper for

the Christian religion is also proper for the Christian church.

The Christian religion is that higher consciousness of man's relation to God, which, ascending from a lower to a higher degree of religious consciousness, has been attained by humanity. And so the Christian religion and all men who profess the true Christian religion, knowing that they have reached a certain degree of clearness and a certain height of the religious consciousness only thanks to humanity's constant motion from darkness to light, cannot help but be tolerant. By recognizing themselves as in possession of but a certain degree of the truth, which is made clearer and clearer and rises higher and higher only through the united efforts of humanity, they, in meeting new beliefs which differ from their own, not only do not reject them, but joyfully welcome them, study them, verify their own beliefs according to them, reject what is not in agreement with reason, accept what elucidates and advances the truth professed by them, and still more become confirmed in what is the same in all beliefs.

Such is the property of the Christian religion in general, and thus act the men who profess Christianity. Not thus the church. The church, by recognizing itself as the one guardian of the full, divine, eternal, for ever unchangeable truth, which God Himself has revealed to men, cannot help but look upon every religious teaching that differs from that which is expressed in its own dogmas as upon a lying, harmful, and even ill-intentioned teaching (if it proceeds from those who know the condition of the church), which is drawing people to everlasting perdition. And so, by its own definition, the church cannot be tolerant and cannot help using against all the faiths, as also against the professors of faiths which dissent from its own, all those means which it considers in keeping with its own doctrine. Thus the Christian religion and the Christian church are two totally different conceptions.

It is true, every church asserts that it is the only representative of Christianity, but the Christian religion, that is, the professors of the free Christian religion, in no way considers the church to be the representative of Christianity. The professors of the Christian religion could not do so, since there are many churches, and each regards itself as the bearer of all the divine truth.

It is this confusion of two different conceptions, which is constantly used by the churchmen for various purposes, that is the cause why all their discussions about the desirability of religious toleration for the church suffer from a common obscurity, inflatedness, indefiniteness, and so complete inconclusiveness.

Such are in Russia all the discussions of a Khomyakóv, Samárin, Aksákov, and so forth, and from this also suffers Mr. Stakhóvich's speech They are all not only empty, but even harmful babbling, which again drives incense smoke into the eyes of those who are beginning to be freed from the deception.

4

Thus the answer to the question as to how the church, which is defined as a society of men having for their purpose the preaching of the truth, and which has no instruments of violence and can have none, can none the less exert violence against the dissenting faiths, is only this, that the establishment which calls itself the Christian church is not a Christian, but a worldly institution which is different from Christianity and is rather hostile to it.

When this idea first came to me, I did not believe it, so firmly have we been impressed from childhood with awe for the sacredness of the church. At first I thought that it was a paradox, that in such a definition of the church there was some mistake. But the farther I proceeded in viewing this question from all sides, the more indubitable

it became to me that the definition of the church as a non-Christian institution, hostile to Christianity, was precise, and that without it we could not explain all those contradictions which are contained in the past and the present activity of the church.

Indeed, what is the church? The professors of the church say that it is a society, established by Christ, which has been entrusted with the exclusive care and propaganda of the unquestionable divine truth, which was testified to by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the members of the church, and that this testimony of the Holy Ghost is transmitted from generation to generation by the putting on of hands, as established by Christ.

But we need only analyze the data by which this is proved, to become convinced that all these assertions are quite arbitrary. The two texts (of the Scripture, which the church considers sacred), on which the arguments about the establishment of the church by Christ Himself are based, do not have at all the significance ascribed to them and in no case can they signify the establishment of a church, since the very concept of the church did not at all exist in the time when the Gospel was written, much less in the time of Christ. But the third text on which they base their exclusive right to teach the divine truth, the final verses of Mark and Matthew, is by all the investigators of Holy Scripture recognized as forged. Still less can it be proved that the descent of tongues of fire upon the heads of the disciples, which was seen only by the disciples, signifies that everything which shall be said, not only by these disciples, but also by all those upon whom the disciples have laid their hands, will be said by God, that is, by the Holy Ghost, and so is always unquestionably true.

The main thing is this, that, even if this were proved (which is quite impossible), there is no possibility of

proving that this gift of infallibility abides precisely in the church which asserts this of itself. The chief, insolvable difficulty is this, that the church is not one and that every church asserts concerning itself that it alone has the truth, while all the others are wrong. Thus the assertion of every church that it alone has the truth has really as much weight as the assertion of a man who says, "Upon my word, I am right, and all those who disagree with me are wrong."

"Upon my word, we alone constitute the true church," — in this alone are all the proofs of the infallibility of every church to be found. Such a basis, in itself very shaky and very false, has also this other fault, that, by excluding every verification of what the church, which considers itself infallible, preaches, it opens an unlimited field for all kinds of most confused fancies, which are given out as the truth. When senseless and fantastic assertions are given out as the truth, there naturally appear men who protest against such assertions. But to compel people to believe in senseless and fantastic assertions, there exists but one means, — violence.

The whole Nicene symbol is a concatenation of senseless and fantastic assertions, which could have arisen only among men who recognized themselves as infallible, and could have been disseminated only through violence.

Before all time God the Father begot God the Son, from whom everything began. This Son was sent into the world to save men and there was born anew of a virgin, and was crucified, and rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, where he sits on the right side of the Father. At the end of the world this Son will come to judge the living and the dead, — and all that is an indubitable truth, revealed by God Himself.

If we are unable in the twentieth century to accept all these dogmas, which are contrary to common sense and

to human knowledge, people were not deprived of common sense even at the time of the Nicene Council and could not have been able to accept all these strange dogmas, and expressed their dissent from them.

But the church, regarding itself as alone in possession of the full truth, could not admit this and used the most effective means against this dissent and its dissemination, — violence.

The church, united with the temporal power, has always made use of violence, — latent violence, — but none the less definite and effective; it collected taxes from everybody by force, without inquiring after their agreement or disagreement with the state religion, and demanded of them the profession of that religion.

Having collected the money by violence, it in this manner established the most powerful hypnotization for the strengthening of its own faith among children and adults. If this means was not sufficient, it simply employed the violence of the temporal power. Thus there can be no such thing as religious toleration in the church, which is supported by the state. And this cannot be otherwise, so long as the churches are churches.

It will be said: the churches, like those of the Quakers, Wesleyans, Shakers, Mormons, and, especially now, the Catholic congregations, collect money from their members without the exertion of force, and so do not exert violence in supporting themselves. But that is not true: the money which has been collected by rich men, especially the Catholic congregations, during centuries of hypnotization by means of money, is not a free contribution by the members of the church, but the result of the grossest violence. Money is collected by means of violence and is always an instrument of violence. For the church to be able to consider itself tolerant, it must be free from all monetary influences. "You have received it gratis — give it gratis."

5

In reality the church has no instruments of violence. If violence is exerted, it is not exerted by the church itself, but by the temporal power with which it is connected, and so there appears the question: why do the government and the ruling classes unite with the church and support it? It would seem that the beliefs preached by the church ought to be a matter of indifference to the governments and the ruling classes. It would seem that it ought to be a matter of absolute indifference to the governments and the ruling classes what the nations governed by them believe in, — whether they are Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox, or Mohammedans. But that is not so.

At any time the religious beliefs correspond to the social structure, that is, the social structure arranges itself in accordance with the religious beliefs. And thus, as the religious beliefs of the nation are, so is also the social structure. The governments and the ruling classes know that, and, therefore, they always support the religious teaching which corresponds to their advantageous position. The governments and the ruling classes know that the true Christian religion denies the power which is based on violence, the distinction of classes, the accumulation of wealth, punishments, wars, — everything in consequence of which the government and the ruling classes occupy their advantageous position, and so they consider it necessary to support the faith which justifies their position. This is done by the church-corrupted Christianity, in that, by having distorted the true Christianity, it conceals the access to it from people.

The governments and the ruling classes could not exist without this corruption of Christianity, which is called the church faith. The church with its lie could not exist without any direct or indirect violence of the governments

or of the ruling classes. In some states this violence finds its expression in persecutions; in others, in the exclusive protection granted to the wealthy classes, which are in possession of the wealth. But the possession of wealth is conditioned by violence. Therefore, the church, the government, and the ruling classes mutually support one another. Thus the opponents of religious toleration are quite right when they defend, on the part of the church, the right of violence and persecutions on which its existence is based. The advocates of religious toleration would be right only in case they did not turn to the church, but to the state, and in case they demanded what is incorrectly called the "separation of church and state," but what in reality is only the cessation of the government's exclusive support by the direct means of violence, or by the indirect means, — the subsidizing of some one faith.

But to demand of the church that it should refrain from violence in any shape whatever is the same as to demand of a man who is besieged on all sides that he shall lay down his arms and surrender himself to the enemy.

Tolerant can be only the true, free Christianity, which is not connected with any worldly institutions, and so is afraid of nothing and of no one, and has for its aim a greater and ever greater recognition of the divine truth and a greater and ever greater realization of the same in life.

LETTERS ON AND TO THE DUKHOBORS

1895 – 1900

LETTERS ON AND TO THE DUKHOBORS

PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS IN RUSSIA IN 1895

LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF AN ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

DEAR SIR: — I send you for publication in your newspaper a memorandum about the persecutions to which the Dukhobors, sectarians of the Caucasus, were subjected this summer. There is only one way of helping the persecuted, but especially the persecutors, who do not know what they do, and that is, publicity, the presentation of the matter to the judgment of public opinion, which, by expressing its disapproval of the persecutors and its sympathy with the persecuted, will keep the first from committing acts of cruelty, which frequently are only the result of their crass ignorance, and will sustain courage in the second and will give them consolations in their sufferings.

In Russia this article will not be passed by the censor, and so I turn to you, asking you to publish it in your paper. This memorandum was composed by a friend of mine, who travelled to the spot, to collect exact information in regard to the occurrences, and so the information given may be depended upon.

The fact that the information given in this article was received only from one side, the persecuted, while the other side, that of the persecutors, was not asked, does not diminish the reliability of the information. The persecuted had no reason to conceal what they were doing: they proclaimed it to the whole world; but the persecutors cannot help but be ashamed of the measures which they employed against the persecuted, and so they will do everything in their power to conceal their acts. But if in the accounts of the Dukhobors there might have been any exaggerations, we have carefully excluded everything which appeared so to us.

What is reliable and undoubted in this memorandum is the essential part, namely, that the Dukhobors have in various places been subjected to repeated tortures, that the majority of them are shut up in prisons, and that more than 450 families are completely ruined and driven out of their homes, only because they would not act contrary to their religious convictions.

All this is unquestionably reliable, because it was printed in many Russian newspapers and did not provoke any denial on the part of the government.

The ideas evoked in me by these events I have expressed separately, and, if you want them, I will send them to you to be printed after this memorandum has appeared.

EPILOGUE TO THE MEMORANDUM

> In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (John xvi. 33).

The Dukhobors settled in the Caucasus have been subjected to cruel persecutions by the Russian authorities, and these persecutions, as described in a note written by a man who went to the spot, have been continued until the present time.

The Dukhobors have been beaten, flogged, and trampled

underfoot by horses; the Cossacks were quartered upon the Dukhobor settlements, and with permission of the authorities they permitted themselves all kinds of acts of violence against the inhabitants; those who refused to do military service were tortured physically and morally, and prosperous settlers, who by the labour of decades had established their prosperity, were driven from their homes and settled without allotment of land and without means of subsistence in Georgian villages.

The cause of these persecutions is this, that through various causes three-fourths of all the Dukhobors, namely, about fifteen thousand men (there are twenty thousand of them), of late returned with new vigour and conscious effort to their former Christian beliefs and this summer decided to carry out Christ's law of not resisting evil with violence. This decision on the one hand caused them to destroy their weapons, which in the Caucasus are considered to be such a necessity, and thus, by renouncing every possibility of resisting by means of violence, to give themselves into the power of every violator; on the other hand it led them under no condition to take part in any acts of violence, as demanded of them by the government, consequently also in no military or other service, which would demand the employment of violence. The government could not admit such a departure of tens of thousands from the demands established by law, and a struggle ensued. Their government demands the fulfilment of its demands. The Dukhobors do not submit.

The government cannot yield. Not only has such a refusal of the Dukhobors to fulfil the demands of the government no legal foundation, from the worldly point of view, and is contrary to all the existing and time-honoured order, but it is also impossible to admit these refusals, if for no other reason, because, if they be admitted in the case of ten, there will to-morrow be one thousand, one hundred thousand, who will similarly

refuse to bear the burdens of taxes and service. Admit this, and, instead of order and protection of life, there will ensue arbitrary rule and chaos, and nobody's property and life will be protected. Thus the governmental persons must reason, and they cannot reason otherwise, and are not at all to blame for reasoning thus. Aside from any egotistical concern that such refusals must deprive him of his means of existence, which are collected from the masses by force, aside from every egotistical concern about himself, every man connected with the government, from the Tsar down to the rural chief, must to the bottom of his heart be provoked by the refusal of some uncultured, semi-illiterate people to fulfil the demands of the government, which are obligatory for all men. "By what right," he thinks, "do these insignificant people allow themselves to deny what is recognized by all, is sanctified by law, and is done everywhere?" And, indeed, the governmental persons cannot be blamed for acting as they do. They employ violence, rude violence, but they cannot do otherwise. Indeed, is it possible by means of rational, humane means to compel people who profess the Christian faith to enter into the class of men who teach murder and prepare themselves for it? It is possible to sustain the deceived people in the deception by means of every kind of stultification, oaths, theological, philosophical, and juridical sophisms, but the moment the deception is in some way destroyed, and people, like the Dukhobors, calling things by their name, say, "We are Christians and so cannot kill," the lie is revealed, and it becomes impossible to convince such people by means of rational proofs. The only possibility of compelling such people to obey consists in blows, executions, confiscation of the home, and hunger and cold for the members of their families. And this they do. So long as the men of the government have not come to see their delusion, they can do nothing else and so are not to blame. Still less are to blame the

Christians who refuse to take part in the study of murder and to enter into a class of men who are educated to kill all those whom the government commands them to kill. They, too, cannot act otherwise. A so-called Christian, who is baptized and brought up in Orthodoxy, Catholicism, or Protestantism, can continue to serve violence and murder, so long as he does not understand the deception to which he was subjected. But the moment he comes to understand that every man is responsible to God for his acts, and that this responsibility cannot be shifted, nor be removed from him by an oath, and that he must not kill nor prepare himself for murder, his participation in the army becomes morally as impossible as it is physically impossible for him to lift a weight of one hundred puds.

In this does the terrible tragedy of the relation of Christianity to the government consist. The tragedy is this, that the governments have to rule over Christian nations, which are not yet entirely enlightened, but are becoming from day to day more enlightened by Christ's teaching. All the governments since the time of Constantine have known and felt this, and have for their self-preservation instinctively done everything they could, in order to shroud the true meaning of Christianity and crush its spirit. They have known that if this spirit is acquired by men, violence will come to an end and government will naturally destroy itself, and so the governments have done their work, building up the governmental establishments, heaping laws and institutions one upon another, and hoping to bury underneath it the undying spirit of Christ, which is implanted in the hearts of men.

The governments have done their work, but the Christian teaching has at the same time done its work, penetrating deeper and deeper into the hearts of men. And the time came when the Christian cause, as it ought,

because the Christian cause is God's cause, while the government's cause is man's cause, got ahead of the government's cause.

And as in the burning of a pyre there comes a time when the fire, after it has worked within for a long time and only by an occasional burst of fire and smoke has indicated its presence, finally bursts forth on all sides, and it becomes impossible to stop the burning, even so in the struggle of the Christian spirit with the pagan laws and institutions there comes a time when this Christian spirit bursts forth everywhere, can no longer be subdued, and every moment threatens destruction to those institutions which were heaped upon it.

Indeed, what can and must the government do in respect to these fifteen thousand Dukhobors, who refuse to do military service? What is to be done with them? They cannot be left as they are. Even with the present state of affairs in the beginning of the motion, there have appeared Orthodox people who have followed the example set by the Dukhobors. What will happen later? What will happen later, if the same shall be done by the Milkers, Stundists, Lashers, Wanderers, who look upon the government and the military service in just the same way, but have not done like the Dukhobors, only because they could not make up their minds to be the first, and were afraid of suffering? And there are millions of such people, not in Russia alone, but in all Christian countries, and not only in Christian countries, but also in Mussulman countries, in Persia and Turkey and Arabia, people like the Harijites and Babists. It is necessary for the sake of others to make harmless tens of thousands of men who do not recognize governments and do not wish to take part in them. How is this to be done? It is impossible to kill them: there are too many of them. It is awkward to put them all in prison. All that can be done is to ruin and torment them; and it is this that

is done with them. But what if these torments shall not have the desired effect, and they shall continue to profess the truth and so shall attract a still greater number of men to follow their example?

The position of the governments is terrible, terrible for this very reason, that they have nothing to fall back upon. It is certainly impossible to recognize as bad the acts of men like Drózhzhin, who was tortured to death in a prison, or like Izyumchénko, who is even now pining away in Siberia, or like Doctor Shkarvan, who is sentenced to imprisonment in Austria, or like all those who are now in prison, prepared for suffering and for death, if only they do not have to depart from their very simple, all-comprehensible, universally approved religious convictions, which prohibit murder and participation in it. By no intricacy of thought is it possible to call the acts of these men bad or unchristian, and it is not only impossible not to approve of them, but even not to be delighted with them, because it is impossible not to recognize that the men who act in this manner act so in the name of the very highest qualities of the human soul, without the recognition of whose height human life falls down to the level of animal existence. If the government shall not persecute men who, like the Dukhobors, Stundists, Nazarenes, and separate individuals, refuse to take part in the acts of the government, the advantage of the Christian peaceable manner of life will attract to itself not only sincerely convinced Christians, but also such as will put on the mask of Christianity for the sake of their advantage, and so the number of men who do not fulfil the demands of the government will grow larger and larger. But if the government is cruel, as it now is, to such men, this cruelty itself toward men who are guilty of nothing but leading a more moral and a better life than others, and want in practice to fulfil the law of the good, as professed by all men, will more and more

repel people from the government. And very soon the governments will not find any people who are ready to support them by means of violence. The semisavage Cossacks, who beat the Dukhobors by order of the authorities, very soon "began to pine," as they expressed themselves, when they were quartered in the Dukhobor settlements, that is, their consciences began to trouble them, and the authorities, fearing the harmful influence of the Dukhobors upon them, hastened to take them away from there.

Not one persecution of innocent people ends otherwise than by men's passing over from among the persecutors to the convictions of the persecuted, as was the case with the warrior Simon, who destroyed the Paulicians and then passed over to their faith. The more lenient the government shall be to the people who profess Christianity, the more quickly will the number of the true Christians be increased. The more cruel the government shall be, the more quickly will the number of people who serve the government be diminished. Thus, whether the government treats people, who in their life profess Christianity, with leniency or cruelty, it will itself in every way contribute to its own destruction. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of the world be cast out" (John xii. 31). This judgment was achieved eighteen hundred years ago, that is, when in the place of the truth of external justice was put the truth of love. No matter how much brush is thrown on a burning pile, for the purpose of putting out the fire, — the undying fire, the fire of truth, will be choked for a little while only, but will be fanned more than before and will burn everything which is put on it.

Even if it should happen that a few champions of truth, as has always happened, should weaken in their struggle and fulfil the government's demands, this would not change the situation one hair's breadth. Let the

Dukhobors of the Caucasus surrender, succumbing to the sufferings to which their grandparents, wives, and children are subjected, there will to-morrow arise new champions, who will be prepared on all sides and will more and more boldly put forth their demands and will less and less be able to surrender. The truth cannot stop being the truth, because under the pressure of sufferings people who bear testimony to it grow faint. The divine must vanquish the human.

"But what will happen if the government is destroyed?" I hear the question, which is always put by the advocates of power, on the assumption that if there shall not be what now is, there will be nothing, and everything will perish. The answer to this question is always one and the same. There will be what must be, what pleases God, what is in agreement with His law, as implanted in our hearts and revealed to our reason. If the government should be destroyed because we, as the revolutionists did, should destroy it, then it would be natural for the question as to what would happen after the government is destroyed to demand an answer from those who destroy the government. But the destruction of the government which is taking place now is not taking place because some one, some people, want deliberately to destroy it: it is being destroyed, because it is not in harmony with the will of God, which was revealed to our reason and implanted in our hearts. A man who refuses to put his brothers into prisons and to kill them has no intention of destroying the government; he merely does not want to do what is contrary to the will of God, what not only he, but even all men who have come out of the beastly state, recognize as an unquestionable evil. If by this the government is destroyed, it means only that the government demands what is contrary to God's will, that is, evil, and that, therefore, the government is an evil and must be destroyed. The

change which in our time is taking place in the social life of the nations, though we cannot entirely imagine the form which it will assume, cannot be bad, because this change takes place and will take place, not by the arbitrary will of men, but by an internal demand, common to all men, of the divine principle which is implanted in the hearts of men. When childbirth takes place, all our activity should be directed, not to counteracting it, but to aiding it. But this aid is not attained by a departure from the divine truth revealed to us, but, on the contrary, by a public and fearless profession of it. Such a profession of the truth gives, not only full satisfaction to those who profess the truth, but also the greatest good to men, both to the violated and the violators. Salvation is not behind, but before us.

The moment of the crisis in the change of the social form of life and of the substitution for the violence-using government of another force which shall bind men together has already come. And the way out of it is no longer in the arrest of the process or in the reverse motion, but only in the forward movement along the path which in the hearts of men is pointed out to them by Christ's law.

One more little effort, and the Galilean will conquer, — not in that terrible sense in which the pagan king ascribed victory to Him, but in the true sense, in which He said of Himself that He had overcome the world. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33); for He has, indeed, overcome the world, not in the mystical sense of an invisible victory over sin, but in the simple, clear, and comprehensible sense that, if we shall only be of good cheer and shall boldly profess Him, there will very soon not only be an end to all those terrible persecutions which are committed against all the true disciples of Christ who profess His teaching in fact, but there will also be an end to pris-

ons, gallows, wars, debauchery, luxury, idleness, poverty crushed by labour, under which Christian humanity now groans.

September 19, 1895.

TWO LETTERS TO THE LEADER OF THE DUKHOBORS, P. V. VERIGIN

1

Dear Brother: — I. M. Tregúbov sent me your letter to him, and I read it with pleasure; I was happy to learn something about you, and I, so to speak, heard your voice and understood what you are thinking about, how you think, and what you live by. I see from your letter that you live in a spiritual world and are busy with spiritual questions. For the good of men that is most important, because only in the spirit is man free, and only by means of the spirit is God's work done, and only in the spirit does man feel himself to be in union with God, since "God is spirit." The ideas expressed by you in the letter as to the superiority of a living communion to the dead book have pleased me very much, and I share them with you. I write books, and so I know all the harm which they produce; I know how people, who do not wish to accept the truth, know how not to read or understand what goes against the grain and arraigns them, how they misinterpret and distort, how they have misinterpreted the Gospel. I know all that, but still I consider books to be inevitable in our time. I say "in our time," in distinction from the evangelical times when there was no printing, when there were no books, and there existed only an oral means for the diffusion of ideas. It was then possible to get along without a book, because even the enemies of truth did not have any book; but now it is not right to leave this powerful instrument for

deception to the enemies alone, and not to make use of it for the sake of truth. Not to make use of books or of writing for the transmission of our thoughts or for the acquisition of other people's thoughts is the same as not to make use of the force of our voice for imparting at once to several people what we have to say, or not to make use of our hearing to understand what another person is saying aloud, and to recognize the possibility of the transmission and acquisition of thought only in private or in a whisper.

Writing and printing have only increased a thousand times, a hundred thousand times, the number of men who may hear him who expresses his thoughts, but the relation between the exponent and the recipient remains the same: it is with print as with an oral conversation, in which the hearer may grasp and understand what is being told him, or may just as well pay no heed to it; a hearer may do with his ears what a reader does with a book, when he misinterprets it completely; just as we see them write in books much that is useless and trifling, so it is also with speaking. There is some difference, but the difference is sometimes in favour of oral, and sometimes of printed intercourse. The advantage of an oral transmission is this, that the hearer feels the soul of the speaker; but there is also a disadvantage connected with it, which is, that very frequently empty talkers, such as lawyers, who are endowed with the gift of speech, carry away people, not by the reasonableness of their argument, but by the mastery of their oratorical art, which is not the case with books; another advantage of the oral transmission is this, that he who does not understand may ask a question, but the disadvantage is this, that those who do not understand, who frequently do not understand on purpose, may ask something irrelevant and thus interrupt the train of thought, which also is not the case with books.

The disadvantages of books are these, that, in the first place, paper is very patient, and it is possible to express nonsense, which costs enormous labour on the part of those who make the paper and set up the type, which cannot be done in the oral transmission, because nobody is going to listen to nonsense; in the second place, books grow in enormous numbers, while good ones are lost in a sea of stupid, empty, and harmful books. But the advantages of printing are also very great, consisting mainly in this, that the circle of hearers is increased a hundredfold and a thousandfold, as compared with the hearers of an oral discourse. And this increase in the number of hearers is important, not because there are many of them, but because amidst millions of people of various nations and positions, to whom the book is accessible, there will naturally be segregated some who share the same ideas, and, thanks to the book, though tens of thousands of versts apart and not acquainted with one another, they are united and live as one soul and receive spiritual joy and a lively consciousness that they are not alone. It is such communion that I now hold with you and with many, very many people of other nations, who have never seen me, but who are nearer to me than my own carnal sons and brothers. But the chief consideration in favour of the book is this, that with a certain degree of the development of the external conditions of life, books, printing in general, have become a means for people's intercommunication, and so this means cannot be neglected. So many harmful books have been written and disseminated that this harm can be counteracted only by means of books. One wedge drives out another. Christ has said, "What ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops." The printed word is this same proclamation from the housetops. The printed word is the same tongue, only it reaches very far, and so everything which is said of the tongue refers also to the printed word: with it we bless God, and with it we curse

men, who are created in the image of God; and so we cannot be sufficiently attentive to what we say and hear, as also to what we print and read. I write all this, not because I think that you think differently (I see from your letter that you understand it in the same way), but because these thoughts occurred to me and I wanted to share them with you. I read with especial pleasure what you say about this, that, "if we preserved everything already given us from above, we should be completely happy; what is indispensable and legitimate must by all means be in every one and is received directly from above or from within." That is quite true, and I myself understand man in the same way. Every man would unquestionably know the whole divine truth, everything which he ought to know, in order to fulfil in this life what God wants of him, if only this truth, as revealed to man, were not dimmed by false human interpretations. And so, to learn the divine truth, a man must first of all reject all the false interpretations and all the worldly temptations, which lead him to the acceptance of these interpretations, and then there will be left the one truth, which is accessible to babes, because it is proper for the human soul. But the chief difficulty lies in this, that, in rejecting the lie, we are likely to reject with it a part of the truth, and that, in elucidating the truth, we are likely to introduce new errors.

I thank you, dear brother, for the greeting which you sent me. Write me to Moscow, if nothing interferes. Can I not do something for you? You will make me happy by giving me some commission.

I embrace you in brotherly love.

November 21, 1895.

2

DEAR FRIEND: — I received your letter yesterday, and I hasten to answer you. It takes a long time for our

letters to reach one another, and I have not much time left to live.

In your argument against books there is much justice and cleverness, — the comparison with the assistant and the surgeon, — but they are none of them well grounded, mainly because you compare books with the living intercourse, as though books excluded the living intercourse. In reality one does not exclude the other, and one helps the other.

To tell you the truth, your stubborn opposition to books looks to me like an exclusive sectarian method of defence of an opinion, as once accepted and expressed. Such an exclusiveness does not harmonize with that idea which I have formed of your intellect and, above all, of your openness and sincerity. God leads men toward Himself and toward the fulfilment of His will by all kinds of paths, — by a conscious one, when men try to do His will, and by an unconscious one, when they do, as they think, their own will.

To do God's will, to fulfil His kingdom upon earth, we need the union of men among themselves, we need that all men should be one, as Christ recognized Himself one with the Father. For this union there are needed an internal means, — the cognition and clear expression of the truth, such as was given by Christ and as unites all men, and an external means, — the dissemination of this expression of the truth, which is accomplished in the most varied ways: by commerce, by conquests, by travel, by books, by railways, by telegraphs, and by many other means, some of which, like conquest, I must reject, but others, like books and rapid means of communication, I have no reason to reject and cannot help using, if I do not wish to deprive myself of a convenient instrument for serving God. But as to the retort, that for books and for the railways it is necessary to crawl underground for the ore and into a smelting furnace, that is also true

in the case of the ploughshare, the spade, the scythe. And then, there is nothing wrong in having to crawl underground for the ore or to work in a smelting furnace, and when I was a young man I, like any good young man, would have gladly crawled underground to work in iron, just for the sake of bravado, so long as that would not have been compulsory and would not have lasted a whole life, and would have been surrounded by all kinds of conveniences, which men will certainly invent some day, when all shall work, and not merely some hired people.

Well, we will not speak any more of it; but believe me, that, if I write to you what I do, I do not do so because I have written a lot of books and still continue to write them, — I with my whole heart agree with you that the simplest, best life is more precious than the most beautiful books, — and not even because thanks to books I enter into communion with people: this autumn I entered into communion with a Hindoo, who fully shares our Christian views and who sent me an English book by a countryman of his, in which there is an exposition of the teaching of the Brahmins that coincides with the essence of Christ's teaching, and I entered into communion with some Japanese, two of whom visited me the other day, and who profess and preach a purely Christian morality. It is not this that urges me to disagree with you and not to reject printing, any more than railways, telephones, and similar things, but this, that, when I see an ant-hill in the meadow, I cannot admit that the ants must be in error, when they raise that hill and do everything they do in it. Similarly, as I look at everything which men have done in a material way, I cannot admit that they have done it all by mistake. As a man (and not an ant), I see defects in the human hill and cannot help wishing to correct them, — in this does my share in the common work consist, — I do not wish to destroy the whole hill

of human labour, but only more correctly to distribute what is placed irregularly in it. There is very much that is irregularly distributed in the human hill, and it is about this that I have written and write, have suffered and suffer, and try to change to the best of my strength.

What is irregular in our life is, in the first place and above all else, this, that the means is taken for the end, that what ought to be the end — the good of our neighbour — is made a means, that is, that man's good, his very life, is sacrificed for the production of an instrument, which is at times needed for all men, and at times only for the whim of one person, as is the case when human lives are ruined in the production of articles which are needed only by a few and which often are not needed by any one and are even harmful. What is irregular is this, that men forget or do not know that not only for the production of a mirror, but even of the most important and necessary articles, — as of a ploughshare, a scythe, — there should not only no life be ruined, but even the happiness of ever so insignificant a man should not be impaired, because the meaning of human life is only in the good of all men. To violate the life and the good of any one man for the good of men is the same as to cut off an animal's limb for its good.

In this does the terrible mistake of our time consist; not in this, that we have printing, railways, and such things, but in this, that men consider it allowable to sacrifice the good of even one man for the performance of any work. As soon as men lost the meaning and the purpose of what they are doing (there is but one end, — the good of our neighbour), the moment they decided that we could sacrifice the life and the good of an old man or even an idiot, who is living as a burden to all people, it became possible to sacrifice even a less old and stupid person, and there is no limit, — we may sacrifice

everybody for a cause. That is irregular, and against that we must struggle.

Men must come to understand that, no matter how useful and important the printing of books, the railways, a plough, a scythe, may seem to us, we do not need them, and must let them go to perdition, until we have learned to make them without ruining the happiness and lives of men. In this does the whole question consist, and people blunder in this question, going about it now from one side, and now from another. Some say: "You want to destroy everything that humanity has acquired with so much labour, — you want to return to barbarism, in the name of some moral demands. The moral demands are irregular, if they are contrary to the well-being which humanity attains by its progress." Others say: "I am afraid that you are of that opinion and ascribe that opinion to me, — that, since all the material perfections of life are contrary to the moral demands, all these perfections are false in themselves and must be abandoned." To the first objectors I reply that there is nothing to destroy, and that we must only not forget that the aim of the life of humanity is the good of all men, and that, therefore, the moment any improvement deprives even one person of the good, this improvement must be given up and must not be used, until a means is found for producing and using it in such a way that the good of not even one man is impaired. I think that with such a view of life many aimless and harmful productions will be discontinued, and for the useful ones very soon means will be found for producing them, without impairing the good of men. To the second class of objectors I reply that humanity, in passing from the stone age to the bronze and iron age, and then reaching the present material condition, could by no means have erred, but followed the invariable law of perfection, and that it is not only not desirable to turn back, but that it is even impossible to do so, as it is

impossible again to become an ape, and that, indeed, the problem of the man of our time does not at all consist in dreaming of what men used to be and how they could again become such as they were, but in serving the good of the men now living. But for the good of the men now living it is necessary for people not to torment or oppress others, not to deprive them of the products of their labour, not to compel them to work at things that are useless for them or that they cannot make use of, and, above all, not to consider it possible or lawful, in the name of any cause or material success, to impair the life and the good of a neighbour or, what is the same from another side, — not to violate love.

If men only knew that the end of humanity is not material progress, that this progress is an inevitable growth, while the one end is the good of all men, that this end is higher than any material purpose which men may set for themselves, everything would occupy its proper place. It is to this that the men of our time must direct all their efforts.

To lament the fact that men cannot now live without implements, like the beasts of the forest, living on nothing but fruits, is the same as though I, an old man, should lament because I have no teeth, nor black hairs, nor that strength which I had in my youth. What I must do is not to put in false teeth nor dye my hair nor take gymnastic exercises, but to try to live as becomes an old man, putting in the first place, not worldly matters, but God's work, — union and love, and admitting worldly matters only to the extent to which they do not interfere with God's work. It is this that humanity, too, ought to do at the present period of life.

But to say that the railways, gas, electricity, the printing of books, are injurious, because through them human lives are lost, is the same as though we should say that it is injurious to plough and sow, only because I did not

plough the field in time and allowed it to be overgrown and then sowed it in and ploughed it up, that is, because I did first what ought to have been done last.

I was very glad to hear what you write about your life and how you apply to life what you preach and under these hard conditions, in which you are, earn a livelihood by labour. In nothing else is the sincerity of man recognized so much as in this. I have become very bad in this respect: I am very much surrounded by all kinds of luxury, which I despise and from which I have not the strength to get away. Therefore your example supports me and I continue to try.

Thank you for the excerpts from the diary. In respect to your ideas, as expressed there, I should like to exchange with you my views in the same direction. I will do so another time.

Meanwhile good-bye. Please, do not allow an unkind feeling to rise against me for my objections to your ideas, which you express not only in your letter to me, but also in your letter to Ev. Iv. You are very dear to me, and I try to be as open, as brotherly, to you as I can.

Your loving LEV TOLSTÓY.

October 14, 1896.

NOBEL'S BEQUEST

I READ in some Swedish papers that by Nobel's will a certain sum of money is bequeathed to him who shall most serve the cause of peace.

I assume that the men who served the cause of peace did so only because they served God; and every monetary reward can only be disagreeable to them, in that it gives a selfish character to their service of God. For this reason it would seem that this condition of Nobel's will can hardly be executed correctly. Indeed, it cannot be correctly executed in relation to the men themselves who have all the time served the cause of peace; but, I presume, it will be quite correctly executed, if the money shall be distributed among the families of those men who have served the cause of peace and in consequence of this service are in a most difficult and wretched condition. I am speaking of the families of the Dukhobors of the Caucasus, who, to the number of four thousand people, have been suffering these three years from the Russian government's severe treatment of them, because their husbands, sons, and fathers refuse to do active or reserve military service.

Thirty-two of those who have refused have, after having stayed in the disciplinary battalion, where two of them died, been sent to the worst parts of Siberia, and about three hundred men are pining away in the prisons of the Caucasus and of Russia.

The incompatibility of military service with the profession of Christianity has always been clear for all true Chris-

tians, and has many times been expressed by them; but the church sophists, who are in the service of the authorities, have always known how to drown these voices, so that simple people have not seen this incompatibility and, continuing to call themselves Christians, have entered military service and have obeyed the authorities, which practised them in acts of murder, but the contradiction between the profession of Christianity and the participation in military matters has become more obvious with every day, and finally, in our day, when, on the one hand, the amicable communion and unity of the Christian nations is growing more and more intimate and, on the other, these same nations are more and more burdened with terrible armaments for mutally hostile purposes, it has reached the utmost degree of tension. Everybody speaks of peace, and peace is preached by the preachers and pastors in their churches, by the peace societies in their gatherings, by writers in newspapers and books, by representatives of the government — in their speeches, toasts, and all kinds of demonstrations. Everybody speaks and writes about peace, but nobody believes in it and nobody can believe in it, because these same preachers and pastors, who to-day preach against war, to-morrow bless the flags and cannon and, extolling the commanders, welcome their armies; the members of the peace societies, their orators and writers against war, as soon as their turns come, calmly enter the military caste and prepare themselves for murder; the emperors and kings, who yesterday solemnly assured all men that they are concerned only about peace, the next day exercise their troops for murder and boast to one another of their well-prepared multitudes armed for murder, and so the voices, raised amidst this universal lie, by men who actually want peace, and show not only in words, but also in their acts, that they really want it, cannot help but be heard. These people say: "We are Christians, and so we cannot agree to being mur-

derers. You may kill and torture us, but we will still refuse to be murderers, because that is contrary to that same Christianity which you profess."

These words are very simple and so little new that it seems strange to repeat them, and yet these words, enunciated in our time and under those conditions in which the Dukhobors are, have a great significance. These words again point out to the world that simple, indubitable, and only means for the establishment of actual peace which was long ago pointed out by Christ, but which has been so forgotten by men that they on all sides search for means for the establishment of peace, and have no recourse to the one, long familiar method, which is so simple that for its application nothing new has to be undertaken, but we need only stop doing what we always and for everybody consider to be bad and disgraceful, — if we stop being submissive slaves of those who prepare men for murder. Not only is this method simple, — it is also indubitable. Any other method for the establishment of peace may be doubtful, but not this one, with which men who profess Christianity recognize, what no one has ever doubted, that a Christian cannot be a murderer. And Christians need only recognize what they cannot help recognizing, and there will be eternal inviolable peace among all Christians. Not only is the method simple and indubitable, — it is also the only method for the establishment of peace among Christians. It is the only one, because, so long as Christians will recognize the possibility of their taking part in military service, so long will the armies be in the power of the governments; and so long as they shall be in the power of the governments, there will be wars. I know that this method was employed long ago: it was employed by the ancient Christians, who were for this executed by the Romans, and by the Paulicians, Bogomils, Quakers, Mennonites, and Nazarenes; but never before was this method em-

ployed so frequently, and, above all else, so consciously, as now in Austria, in Prussia, in Switzerland, in Holland, where even the pastors preach in the churches the refusal to do military service, and in Russia, where, for the period of three years, in spite of all its cunning, trickery, and cruelty, the government has been unable to break the determination of a small number of men who are living a Christian life.

To say that this method is ineffective, because, in spite of its having been long in use, the wars have existed at the same time, is the same as saying that in the spring the action of the sun is ineffective, because not all the earth has thawed and the flowers have not yet bloomed.

It is true that in Austria Nazarenes sit in prisons, that separate individuals who have refused to do military service are being tortured to death in disciplinary battalions, and that these same Dukhobors are locked up in jails, while their families die from want in places of deportation, and that the triumph seems to be on the side of violence. But just as in the spring, when the earth has not yet thawed out and the flowers have not yet bloomed, it is possible to see on whose side the victory is, so it is here.

The Dukhobors look upon their ruin, their want, imprisonment, and deportations as the work of serving God, and do this service with pride and joy, concealing nothing and fearing nothing, because nothing worse can be done to them unless they be put to death, which they do not fear.

But not such is the condition of the Russian government. If we, who are deceived by the government, do not see the whole significance of what the Dukhobors are doing, the government does see it; it not only sees the danger, but also the hopelessness of its position. It sees that as soon as people shall be freed from that spell under which they are now, and shall understand that a Chris-

tian cannot be a soldier, — and this they cannot help but understand, — and as soon as they hear what the Dukhobors did, the government will have inevitably to renounce, either Christianity, — and the governments rule in the name of Christianity, — or its power. The government is in relation to the Dukhobors in a desperate state. They cannot be left alone, for all the rest will do likewise; nor is it possible to destroy them, to lock them up for ever, as is done with individuals who interfere with the government — there are too many of them: the old men, wives, children, not only do not dissuade their fathers and husbands, but encourage them in their determination. What is to be done?

And so the government tries secretly, murderously, to destroy these men and to make them harmless, by keeping the men in solitary confinement, with the greatest secrecy, forbidding outsiders to commune with them, and by sending them to the most remote regions of Siberia, among the Yakuts; their families it deports among the Tartars and Georgians: it does not admit any one to them and forbids the printing of any information about the Dukhobors, and commands its accomplices to print all kinds of calumnies against them. But all these methods are inefficient. The light shineth in the dark. It is impossible at once to wipe off from the face of the earth a population of four thousand people who command the respect of all men; if they shall die out under the conditions in which they are placed, this extinction is slow, and extinction for the profession of the truth amidst other people is a most powerful sermon, and this sermon is being carried farther and farther. The government knows this and yet cannot help doing what it is doing; but we can already see on whose side is the victory.

It is this pointing out of the weakness of violence and of the power of truth which is in our time the great desert of the Dukhobors in the matter of the establishment of

peace. For this reason I think that no one has more than they served the cause of peace, and the unfortunate conditions under which their families are living (the details of which may be learned from an article printed in *Humanitas*) are the reason why the money which Nobel wished should be given to those who more than any one else served the cause of peace could not be adjudged to any one with greater justice than to these very Dukhobor families.

This ought to be done, and be done as quickly as possible, because the want of the Dukhobor families is growing and growing, and in winter will have reached its utmost limits. If this money should be adjudged to the Dukhobors, it can be sent directly to Tiflis or to those persons who will be named by me.

Yásnaya Polyána, August 29, 1897.

AN APPEAL IN BEHALF OF THE DUKHOBORS

A POPULATION of twelve thousand men, the Christians of the Universal Brotherhood, as the Dukhobors now living in the Caucasus call themselves, are at the present time in a terrible plight.

Without entering into discussions as to who is right, whether the governments, which recognize the compatibility of Christianity with prisons, executions, and, above all, wars and preparations for them, or the Dukhobors, who recognize the obligatoriness for themselves of the Christian law, which denies every violence, and, moreover, every murder, and so refuse to do military service,—we cannot help but see that this contradiction is very hard to solve: no government can permit people to shirk duties which are fulfilled by everybody and thus to undermine the foundations of the state, while the Dukhobors, on their side, cannot reject a law which they consider divine and, therefore, obligatory in their lives.

So far the governments have found a way out from this contradiction, either by making those who from religious conviction refuse to do military service do harder duties than those of military service, but such as are not opposed to their religious convictions, as has been done in Russia in relation to the Mennonites (they are made to pass the time of military service in some work for the Crown); or, not recognizing the legality of the religious refusal, by punishing those who do not fulfil the common law of the state with imprisonment for the period of their service, as is being done with the Nazarenes in Austria. But the

present Russian government has used against the Dukhobors a third way out from this contradiction, which, it would seem, is no longer used in our time. It not only subjects the refusers to the most painful sufferings, but systematically causes also pain to the fathers, mothers, and children of those who refuse, in all probability intending with the tortures of these innocent families to shake the determination of their recalcitrant members. To say nothing of the floggings, incarcerations, and all kinds of tortures, to which the Dukhobors have been subjected in the disciplinary battalions, from which many have died, and of their deportation to the worst places in Siberia; to say nothing of two hundred reservists, who for the period of two years pined away in prisons and now are separated from their families and are sent away in pairs to the wildest parts of the Caucasus, where, earning no livelihood, they literally starve to death, — to say nothing of these punishments meted out to those who are directly guilty of refusals to do military service, the families of the Dukhobors are systematically ruined and destroyed. They are all deprived of the right to absent themselves from their places of abode, and are specially fined and locked up in prisons for the non-fulfilment of the strangest demands of the authorities, — for not calling themselves by the names they are commanded to give themselves, for going to the mill, for visiting one's own mother, for going from the village to the wood, to collect fuel, — so that the last means of the once wealthy inhabitants are soon exhausted; and the four hundred families, who were deported from their homes and were settled in Tartar and in Georgian villages, where they have to hire themselves houses and support themselves by their own money, having no land and no income, are in such hard straits that in the course of the three years of their deportation one-fourth of them, especially their old men and children, have died from want and from diseases.

It is hard to believe that such a systematic annihilation of a whole population of twelve thousand people should enter into the plans of the Russian government. It is very likely that the higher authorities do not know what is going on in reality, or, if they guess it, do not wish to know the details, feeling that they cannot admit the continuation of such acts, while that is being done which they want to be done.

But it is incontestable that in the course of the last three years the authorities in the Caucasus have not only tormented those who refused, but also their families, and just as systematically have ruined all the Dukhobors and have starved to death those who have been deported.

All the interest in the Dukhobors and every aid sent to them have only brought about the expulsion from Russia of those who have attempted to help the Dukhobors. The government of the Caucasus has surrounded the whole recalcitrant population with a magic circle, and this population is slowly dying out. Three or four years more, and nothing will be left of these Dukhobors.

Thus it would be, if there had not happened an event which evidently was not foreseen by the authorities in the Caucasus. This event was this, that last year the dowager empress visited her son in the Caucasus, when the Dukhobors succeeded in handing her a petition, in which they asked to be permitted to emigrate in a body to some distant places, and if that could not be, to emigrate abroad. The empress transmitted the petition to the highest authorities, and the highest authorities found it possible to permit the Dukhobors to leave Russia.

It would seem that the question was solved and that a way out was found from a situation which was oppressive for both sides. But that only seemed so.

In the situation in which the Dukhobors now are, emigration is impossible for them: they have no means for this, and, being shut up in their places of deportation, they

are unable to attend to this matter. They were wealthy, but in the last years the greater part of their means has been taken from them by the courts and penalties and has been used up in the support of their deported brothers, and they have no way of discussing matters in common and settling upon the conditions of their emigration, since they are not allowed to leave their places of abode and no one is allowed to visit them.

The people are allowed to leave, but they have been previously ruined, so that they have no means for their journey, and the conditions under which they live are such that they are unable to find out anything about places to emigrate to, and how and under what conditions they can do so, and they are even unable to make use of outside help, since the men who want to help them are immediately expelled, while they are for every absence put in prison.

Thus, if these men shall receive no aid from without, they will be completely ruined and will all die out, in spite of the permission to emigrate.

I accidentally know the details of the persecutions and sufferings of these people and am in communication with them, and they ask me to help them, and so I consider it my duty to address all good people, both of Russian and of European society, asking them to help the Dukhobors to get out of that painful situation in which they now are. I have addressed an appeal to Russian society through a Russian newspaper, — I do not know yet whether my appeal will be printed or not, and I now address all the good people of the English and American nations, asking their aid, in the first place, in money, of which a great deal is needed for the transportation of ten thousand people for a long distance, and, in the second, by a direct guidance in the difficulties of the present emigration of people who do not know any languages and have never been outside of Russia.

I assume that the highest Russian authorities will not interfere with such aid and will temper the zeal of the government in the Caucasus, which now allows no communication with the Dukhobors.

Until then I offer my mediation between the people who wish to aid the Dukhobors and enter into relations with them, since my relations with them have so far never been interrupted.

My address: 21 Khamóvnícheski Lane, Moscow.

March 19, 1898.

LETTERS TO THE DUKHOBORS

I. TO THE DUKHOBORS OF THE CAUCASUS

Dear Brothers, who suffer for Christ's teaching: —

Our brother, I. P. N., called on me, on his way home, and I wanted to write to you that not I alone, but many, very many people in Russia and abroad know and think of you and are concerned about you. God willing, we will send you, your children, women, old men, and patients, such help as we can; but as to spiritual help, we and many others, both here and abroad, receive that from you, and we beg you not to forsake us with that help. This help consists in this, that you were the first to show an example of walking on Christ's road: it is easier for those in the rear than for those in the van. Christ said, "They have persecuted me, and they will persecute you," and so it is. I am sorry for the young and the old, and still more sorry for the persecutors: they know by this time that they are not persecuting you, but Christ, the one who came to save them. They see their sin, but are so deeply mired in it that they cannot get away from it. They do their evil work: God help them to come to their senses and to join us. I. P. told me how your brothers who suffer for their refusal to take part in the deeds of the devil, in murder, have acted toward those who have not withstood the persecutions and have consented to serve. If those who themselves suffer for Christ's sake begged forgiveness of those who did not withstand the persecutions for those sufferings which they bore at the instigation and instruction of their brothers, how must I, who

have not been made worthy to suffer for Christ's sake, ask the forgiveness of those to whom my words and writings have caused any suffering!

He who suffers for Christ's sake, not at the instigation of men, but because he cannot act differently before God, is in no need of human consolations and encouragements; but he who acts, not for God's sake, but for the sake of human glory, has a hard time and needs consolation and support, and his forgiveness has to be asked, if he suffers through us. And so, brothers, do not persist in your refusal to do service for the state, if you do so in order not to be accused of weakness. If you can do what is demanded of you, do it, — save thus your feeble, your wives and children, your sick, your old men, from sufferings. If Christ's spirit has not taken His abode in man, keeping him from doing what is contrary to God's will, every one of you ought, for the sake of the love of his own people, to renounce what he did before and submit: no one will condemn you for it. Thus you ought to act, if you can. But if Christ's spirit has taken His abode in a man, and he does not live for himself, but for the fulfilment of God's will, he would gladly do all he can for his suffering relatives, but he cannot do so, just as one man cannot lift forty hundredweights; and if this is so, Christ's spirit, which is opposed to the works of the devil, will teach him how to act, and will console him in his own sufferings and in those of his relatives.

I should like to tell you much and to find out much from you. If God wills it, we shall see each other. Meanwhile good-bye, brothers. I kiss you.

Your weak, but loving brother.

1897.

II. TO THE DUKHOBORS IN CANADA

Dear Brothers: — I send you the money collected. I think that it would be well for you to regard this money,

like all the other means which you receive from good people and working brothers, as your common possession, and not to divide it up among yourselves: give most to him who needs most. Your old people, together with your friends, will help you distribute it.

I have heard that you have suffered much want. God grant that you may bear your trials in the same Christian spirit of submission to God's will, in meekness and brotherly love, in which you lived in the Caucasus, showing people an example of Christian life. All worldly affairs — joys, and sorrows, and wealth, and poverty — pass, without leaving any trace; but our deeds — the good or the bad — leave an eternal trace both in the world, aiding in the establishment of God's kingdom, or interfering with it, and in our souls, bringing it nearer to God, or removing it from Him.

God save you for your good.

Your loving brother.

November 6, 1899.

III. TO THE DUKHOBORS IN CANADA

Dear Brothers and Sisters: — Those of us who profess the Christian teaching and want our life to harmonize with this teaching must help one another. The most necessary help is to point out to one another our sins, those sins and offences into which we fall without noticing them. For this reason I, too, asking my brothers to help me in my sins and offences, which I do not see, regard it as my duty to point out to you, dear brothers and sisters, the offence into which I hear some of you are falling.

You suffered and were exiled and even now suffer want, because you wished to lead a Christian life, not only in words, but also in acts, — because you refused to commit any violence against your neighbour, to swear to do police or military duty, — you even burned your weapons, that

you might not be tempted to defend yourselves with them, and, in spite of all the persecutions, you remained true to the Christian teaching. Your acts became known to men, and the enemies of the Christian teaching were confused when they heard of your acts, and either locked you up and deported you, or exiled you from Russia, trying in every way to conceal your acts from men. But the followers of the Christian teaching rejoiced, triumphed, loved and praised you, and tried to emulate you. Your acts have done much toward the destruction of the kingdom of evil and the confirmation of men in the Christian truth. Now I learn from the letters of our friends that the life of many of you in Canada is such that the very followers of the Christian teaching are confused, and its enemies rejoice and triumph. "Here are your Dukhobors," now say the enemies of Christianity, "the moment they settled in Canada, a free country, they began to live like all other people, hoarding property for themselves, and they not only do not share with their brothers, but even try to get as much as possible for themselves individually. Thus, whatever they did before, they did by command of their head men, without understanding well why they were doing so."

Dear brothers and sisters, — I know and understand the whole difficulty of your position in a strange country, amidst strange people, who do not give anything away for nothing, and I know how terrible it is to think that our friends, feeble people with families, will remain without means and without help. I know how hard it is to live in a commune, and how provoking it is to work for others, who are careless and waste what has been acquired by the labour of others. I know all that, but I know also this, that if you want to continue to live a Christian life and do not wish to renounce everything for which you suffered and were exiled from your country, you cannot live in a worldly way and collect property each for him-

self and for his family, and retain it separately from the rest. It only seems to us that it is possible to be a Christian and have property and retain it separately from the rest, but that is impossible. People need only recognize this, and very soon there will be nothing left of Christianity but words, and, unfortunately, nothing but insincere and hypocritical words. Christ said that it is impossible to serve God and mammon; one or the other: either you hoard property for yourselves, or you live for God. At first it seems that there is no connection between the rejection of violence, the refusal to do military service, and the recognition of property. "We, the Christians, do not worship external gods, do not swear, do not go to court, do not kill," say many of us, "but our acquiring property through labour, not for our enrichment, but as a provision for our near ones, not only does not violate Christ's teaching, but even helps us to fulfil it, if from the surplus we help the needy." But that is not so. Property means that that which I consider to be my own I will not only refuse to give to any one who may wish to take what is mine, but will also defend against him. But to defend what is mine from another, I must use violence, that is, in case of necessity, defend it by means of a struggle, a fight, even murder. If it were not for these acts of violence and of murder, no one would be able to retain property.

But if we retain property, without using violence, it is only so because our property is defended by the threat of using violence and by violence and murder itself, which are committed against people about us.

Our property is not taken from us, even if we do not defend it, only because it is assumed that we would defend it like any one else.

And so the recognition of property is the recognition of violence and murder, and you had no reason to refuse to do military and police service, if you recognize property,

which is maintained only by means of military and police service. Those who do military and police service and enjoy property do better than those who refuse to do military service and do not do it, and yet wish to enjoy property: such people do not serve themselves and want for their own advantage to make use of somebody else's service. The Christian teaching cannot be taken in small bits: either all or nothing. It is all inseparably connected into one whole. If a man recognizes himself as the son of God, from this recognition follows love of his neighbour, and from the love of his neighbour follows at once the rejection of violence, and of the oath, and of service, and of property.

Besides, the bias for property is in itself a deception, and Christ discloses it to us. He says that a man should not trouble himself for the morrow, not because there is any merit in it, or because God commands it, but because such a care leads to nothing, because it is impossible, and because he who will do so will be doing something foolish, since he will try to do the impossible. A man cannot make himself secure, in the first place, because he is mortal, as is shown in the Gospel parable about the rich man who built barns, and, in the second, because it is never possible to find the limit of the necessary security. For how long a time must we make ourselves secure? For a month? for a year? for ten years? for thirty? and shall we make ourselves alone secure, or also our children and grandchildren? and how? in food, or also in our apparel and habitation, and what apparel, and what habitation? He who will begin to provide for himself will never come to the end of his providing, and will only lose his life in vain, as it says: he that shall wish to keep his life shall lose it. Do we not see rich men who live in misery, and poor men who live joyously? Men do not need to provide for themselves, even as Christ has said that He is provided for by God

for all times, just as the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field are provided for.

"Yes, but if that is so, and people shall all stop working, ploughing, sowing, everybody will starve to death," is generally said by those who do not understand Christ's teaching in all its true significance. But that is only an excuse. Christ does not forbid a man to work, and not only does not advise us to be idle, but, on the contrary, commands us to work all the time; but we are not to work for ourselves, but for others. It says, The son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and, He that laboureth is worthy of his meat. A man must work as much as possible; but he must retain nothing for himself, — he must not regard as his own what he has earned, but give it to others.

To provide for himself most securely, man needs one means, and this means is that which Christ teaches: to work as much as possible and to be satisfied with the least. A man who will act thus will everywhere and always be provided for.

The Christian teaching cannot be taken in small bits, — a part to be taken and the rest discarded. If men, accepting Christ's teaching, have renounced violence and war, they must also renounce property, because violence and courts are needed only for the purpose of maintaining property. But if people retain property, they must have violence and courts and the whole worldly structure.

The offence of property is the most grievous offence, the harm of which is very cunningly concealed from men, and thus very many Christians have stumbled over this rock.

And so, dear brothers and sisters, in establishing your life in a strange country, after you have been expelled from your country for faithfulness to the Christian teaching, I see clearly that it is in every way more advantageous for you to continue to live a Christian life than to

change it and begin to live a worldly life. It is more advantageous for you to live and work in common with all those who shall wish to live the life you lead than for each of you to live separately, hoarding only for yourselves and your familes, without sharing with the others. It is more advantageous to live so, in the first place, because, by not laying by for the future, you will not waste your strength in vain in providing for yourselves and your families, which is an impossibility for mortal man; in the second place, you will not waste your strength in a struggle with others, in order that each of you may retain his property distinct from his neighbours; thirdly, because you will work and earn incomparably more by working in common than if you worked in severalty; fourthly, because living in a commune, you will spend less on yourselves than living separately; fifthly, because living a Christian life, you will evoke in the people surrounding you love and respect, instead of envy and hostility, and they may even try to emulate you; sixthly, because you will not ruin the cause which you have begun and with which you confounded your enemies and pleased the friends of Christ. Above all else, it is more advantageous for you to live a Christian life, because, living such a life, you will know that you are doing the will of Him who sent you into the world.

I know, it is hard not to have anything of our own; it is hard to be prepared to give up what we have and need for the family to any one who may ask for it; it is hard to submit to the chosen leaders, when it seems that they are making an unjust distribution; it is hard to bear one another's faults; it is hard to abstain from the habits of luxury, meat, tobacco, wine. I know that all that seems hard. But, dear brothers and sisters, we live to-day and to-morrow we shall go to Him who sent us into this world, in order that we may do His work. Is it worth while, for the sake of calling things our own and being

able to manage matters, for the sake of a few puds of flour, a few dollars, fur coats, a pair of oxen, for the sake of not giving to those who do not work the things which we have earned, for the sake of a word of insult, for the sake of pride, for the sake of a dainty morsel, to go against the will of Him who sent us into the world, and not to do what He clearly wants us to do, and what we can fulfil only in this life? It is but very little that He wants of us, — that we should do unto others what we want for ourselves. And He wants this not for His own sake, but for our sake, because, if we all agreed to do so, we should all live as well as possible upon earth. But if even the whole world lived contrary to His will, no individual who understands why he is sent into this world has any cause to do anything else but that for which he is sent into this world.

To me, an old man on the brink of life and standing aside, this is clear; but even you, dear brothers and sisters, if you shall consider it calmly, casting aside for a time the temptations of the world, will see clearly that no man will lose anything, but each will only gain on all sides, if he shall live not for himself, but in order to do the will of God. It says, "Seek ye the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Any man may verify the truth of it. But you have already verified it, and you know that it is the truth. As it is, we are seeking all these things, property, worldly pleasures, and we do not receive them, and we lose the kingdom of God.

And so, dear brothers and sisters, hold firmly to the life which you have begun, or you will uselessly lose what you had, and will not find what you seek. He who sent us into the world knows better than we what we need, and He has arranged the world in advance in such a way that we receive the highest good both in this and in the future life, not by doing our own will, but His.

I do not dare to give you any advice as to the way you have arranged your communal life, since I know that you, especially your old men, are experienced and wise in such matters. All I know is, that everything will be well, so long as each of you will remember that he did not come into this world by his own will, but by the will of God, who sent him into this short life for the fulfilment of His will. But His will is all expressed in the commandment of love. But to collect property individually and to retain it separately from the rest means to act contrary to the will of God and His commandment.

Good-bye. Your loving brother.

February 15, 1900.

LETTER TO NICHOLAS II.

YOUR IMPERIAL MAJESTY: — The enclosed letter, which was received by me from Canada, is so brief, so touching, so eloquent in its simplicity, and at the same time deals with such an important subject, that I beg you very much to read it yourself and alone, and to surrender yourself to those good sentiments which this letter will no doubt evoke in your good heart.

Nine young women, who are living at liberty and in good circumstances, and two old mothers ask you as a special favour to be permitted to abandon their free and secure condition and to emigrate to the most terrible place of exile and under the most oppressive conditions. What moral and strong people these men and women must be, if, after all those sufferings to which they have been subjected, they are not thinking of themselves, but of one another, of being true to the marital law. How much these people must have suffered for one another in these six years of their separation!

And it is not these people alone who are suffering: tens, if not hundreds of thousands of the best Russian people are suffering as much, if not more, from religious persecutions, which, by some strange misunderstanding, continue to exist and of late have even been intensified in Russia, when all enlightened men and governments have long ago recognized the silliness, the cruel injustice, and, above all, the aimlessness of such persecutions.

I long ago wished to tell you about those terrible and stupid cruelties which, under the guise of defending the

state religion, are perpetrated in your name. My advanced years and the nearness of my death urge me not to delay any longer. Thousands and thousands of truly religious, and so of the best, men, who form the strength of any nation, have already perished or are now perishing in prisons, in hard exile, or are sent out of Russia. The flower of the population, not only of the Caucasus, but also of Russia, eight thousand Dukhobors, have for ever left their country, and not only have no regrets about it, but even think of it with disgust and terror, thanks to those cruelties to which they have been subjected in it. A few thousand Milkers from the Kára Territory and Eriván Government (whose petitions to be permitted to emigrate from Russia I have sent you), the Milkers from Tashként, tens of thousands in the Governments of Khárkov, Kíev, Poltáva, Ekaterinosláv, who are oppressed on account of their religion, ask for nothing but that they be permitted to leave their country and go where they may without molestation profess God as they understand Him, and not as is demanded by the authorities, who for the most part do not recognize any God. Knowing that all this is being done in your name (and you cannot help but know this; if you do not know it, let a truthful man investigate it, and he will confirm my words to you), and knowing that you are able to put a stop to it, you will not find any peace of mind, until you do so.

Your advisers, those same men who have started these persecutions and guide them, will tell you that it is impossible to stop this, that I am a Utopian, an anarchist, an atheist, and that no attention ought to be paid to me. But do not believe them.

What I say, I do not say from my standpoint, but from the standpoint of a rational and enlightened government. And from this standpoint it has long ago been proved that all religious persecutions not only lower the prestige of the government, deprive the government of

the people's love, and do not attain the aim for which it is founded, but even produce the opposite effect.

And so it has long been time, in the first place, to review and destroy the existing laws about persecution for religion's sake; in the second place, to stop all persecutions for departing from the profession of faith adopted by the state; in the third place, to free all men who on the basis of previous laws were deported and exiled for crimes against religion, and, in the fourth place, not to punish as a crime the disagreement of the religious consciousness with the demands of the government, but to try to harmonize this contradiction, as it is harmonized in court in case of a refusal to take the oath by promising to tell the truth, or as it has been harmonized in the case of the Mennonites in their refusal to do military service, by substituting for it obligatory, non-military labour.

By doing so you will not only relieve yourself of a heavy responsibility, which is resting upon you, but you will also feel the joy of the consciousness of having done a good deed.

May God help you to do what pleases Him.

Your loving

LEV TOLSTÓY.

December 7, 1900.

THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION AND INSTRUCTION

From Letters and Diaries

1887–1901

THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION AND INSTRUCTION

I.

The religious conception of life is the foundation of every human life. Man's whole life is arranged on the basis of religion, and all his activity is directed upon it, and so it is clear that education, that is, the preparation of men for life and activity, ought to be based on religion.

But with us, in our so-called civilized world, religion is not only not acknowledged as important and necessary among other subjects, but is also regarded as one of the last, most unnecessary subjects, which, as a survival of antiquity (in which no one believes seriously), for the sake of decency, is somehow taught in the schools. Naturally education under such conditions cannot be rational, but is perverse, and, speaking of education, we have to begin from the beginning.

At the base of everything ought to be religious teaching, such as would agree with the degree of men's enlightenment, without any distinction of nationalities and conditions.

As such religious teaching obviously can serve neither Catholicism, nor Orthodoxy, nor Protestantism, nor Mohammedanism, nor Judaism, nor Buddhism, which are all based on faith in certain prophets, but only a teaching

which is justified by reason, by the sincere striving and experience of every man. And such a teaching is the Christian teaching in its simplest and most rational expression.

The religious basis of life consists in this, that our life has no other meaning than the fulfilment of the will of that infinite Principle, of which we recognize ourselves to be a part; but the will of this principle is the union of everything living, which for men expresses itself first of all in their brotherhood among themselves, in their ministration to one another.

But the union and the ministration to one another form the meaning and work of life, because such is the will of that Principle which rules and guides the world and forms the basis of our existence.

The whole activity of education ought not only to be based on this foundation, but also to be guided by it: everything which in education contributes to the union of the beings, the brotherhood of men, ought to be encouraged; but everything which disunites them ought, on the contrary, to be removed. Everything which contributes to this end more freely ought to be put first, and everything which contributes to it less freely ought to come later.

Now what is education, and in what does it consist?

To answer this question precisely, it is necessary from a certain side to determine the properties of human activity in general.

The property of every human activity is such that, — the psychiaters know this well, — if a man is in the condition of hypnosis or idiocy, that is, if he has no internal motives for his activity, he submits to the first suggestion which acts upon him, for the most part in the form of imitating what he sees, or repeating what he has done: he is told to walk, and he will walk and will continue to move his legs against the wall, as though he were walk-

ing. A spoon is carried up to his mouth, and he will keep carrying a spoon to his mouth, until he is stopped. Thus act hypnotized persons or idiots; but also all sensible people have this property of submitting to the suggestion of another man or to their own. Repeat some word and be thinking of something else or have your attention diverted, and you will unconsciously be repeating the same word. The same is true of acts. This property, which presents itself as so pitiable in the idiot, is a very important and indispensable property in men. If a man were to think of every act of his, he would not be able to abandon himself to the trend of his thoughts and to solve questions of science and of life. This ability to submit to another man's suggestion or to his own gives him the ability to think.

Every one of us does but a small part of his acts consciously, and acts according to his own suggestion or according to a suggestion from another person. The stronger a man is, the less he submits to a foreign suggestion and the more he follows his own, and vice versa. And so, in addition to a man's greater or lesser inborn spiritual strength, the older he is, the less he submits to foreign influences, and the younger he is, the more sensitive he is to foreign suggestions.

On this property of men education is based.

This ability to receive suggestions turns the children over into the full power of their elders, and so it is clear of what importance it is for the children to be subjected, not to false and bad, but to true and good, suggestions.

Everything of which the education of the children is composed, — from prayers, fables, mathematics, dances, to the valuation of other people's acts and of their own, recognizing some as good and others as bad, — all that is transmitted by means of suggestion.

Conscious suggestion is what is called culture; unconscious suggestion is what, in the narrower sense, is called

education, which I will call enlightenment, in contradistinction from the general conception of education, which includes both influences.

All efforts are in our society directed upon culture, but enlightenment is, in consequence of the fact that our life is bad, that is, unenlightened, necessarily neglected.

Educators either — what is most common — conceal their lives and the lives of adults in general from the children, by putting them under exceptional conditions (military schools, institutes, and so forth), or transfer what ought to take place unconsciously into the sphere of the conscious, — they prescribe religious moral precepts, with which it is necessary to add: "*Fais ce que je dis, mais ne fais pas ce que je fais.*" From this results the phenomenon that culture has in our society advanced immeasurably far, while true enlightenment has not only receded, but is even entirely lacking. If at all, it may be found in poor labourers' families, when the members of these families are not subject to the vices that are peculiar to poverty. But of the two different influences upon children, the unconscious and the conscious, the first, that is, the unconscious, moral enlightenment, is incomparably more important both for separate individuals and for society.

The family of a stockholder, landowner, official, or even artist, or writer, living a bourgeois life, without drinking, without dissipation, without quarrelling, without offending people, and considering itself to be moral, wishes to give its children a moral education, but, in spite of its sincere wish and endeavour, such an education will never be successful. It will not be, because the immorality of the life led by this family, by not using in a brotherly way the extorted labours of other men, an immorality which is not perceptible to the adults, who are used to it, offends the pure children and corrupts their ideas of what is good. The children will

hear rules about morality, about respecting men, but unconsciously they will not only imitate, but also make their own the rule that one set of men are called to get their boots and clothes dirty, and another — to clean them, some — to prepare food, and others — to eat it, and so forth. To inculcate upon children who live in such surroundings a true idea of morality is as impossible as to educate to temperance a child that sees everybody around him drinking and is himself given wine to drink. The child feels the sequence and intrinsic weight of virtue and sees clearly — what his elders no longer see — that the brotherhood of men is the foundation of all virtue. But if this brotherhood is violated, when for money, which the others have not, they tear his nurse and chambermaid away from their families, making them serve him, a stranger's child, he dimly, but incontestably, decides that all the other virtues are not needed, and no longer believes in anything.

No religious or moral sermons will free the children of people, who live on money taken away from others and cause others to serve them, from the unconscious immoral suggestion, which remains with them all their lives, corrupting all their judgments concerning the phenomena of life.

Thus, in order that the most important, the unconscious suggestion, that is education, may be good and moral, it is necessary — it sounds strange to say so — that the life of the educators should be good. And it is not to be good, incidentally good, in certain details, but its foundations are to be good. The most unblemished life of murderers living on the fruits of their murders cannot produce any moral influence upon the children who are educated in their midst.

But you will ask: "What shall we call a good life?"

There are infinite degrees of goodness, but there is one common and chief feature of a good life, — it is the striv-

ing after perfection in love. If this exists in the educators, and the children are infected by it, education will not be bad.

For the education of children to be successful, the educators must continue to educate themselves and aid one another more and more to realize that toward which they are striving. There may be very many means for that, besides the chief internal means, — the labour of every man over his own soul. These means have to be found, worked out, applied, discussed. I believe that the criticism which is employed by the perfectionists is good. . . . It is good, I think, to try to find most unfortunate men, who are physically and morally repulsive, and to try and serve them. It is good, I think, to try to cultivate the acquaintance of our enemies who hate us. I write this at haphazard, *au courant de la plume;* but I think that this is a whole, most important sphere of science which is entirely neglected in our time and which is necessary for education. If we only recognized the importance of this side of education, we would work it out. (These are hints for one side of the work of education.)

So this is in general outlines what I think about education. And these are not general reflections, which remain nothing but reflections. If we recognize the justice of this, we shall certainly try with united forces to work out the practical methods of this constant perfecting of the educators, which is so necessary for the cause of education.

These methods exist, and we need only bring them together; but, in addition to this, if we shall only agree to it that this is a most important science, we shall be able to find the means for establishing and developing it.

So much about education.

Now about culture.

This is what I think of culture: culture, or science in

general, learning, is nothing but the transmission of what the wisest and best men have thought and expressed in the various branches of knowledge. Now wise and good men have always thought and expressed their thoughts in three different directions:

(1) In the philosophico-religious direction, — about the meaning of life in general and our own life (religion and philosophy).

(2) In the experimental direction, by drawing conclusions under given conditions (the natural sciences, mechanics, physics, chemistry, physiology).

(3) In the logical direction, by drawing conclusions from the propositions of our thought (mathematics and the mathematical sciences).

All these three kinds of science satisfy the criterion of the brotherhood of men, — they are all cosmopolitan and accessible for all men, and they are all real sciences, — such as you cannot pretend in, such as do not admit of half-knowledge, — you either know, or you do not know.

But all the sciences which do not answer these demands, such as the theological, juridical, and special historical sciences, are harmful and should be excluded.

Not only are there three branches of sciences, — there are also three methods for their transmission.

The first method, the most customary, is that of transmitting by word of mouth, in various languages, and so there appears a new science, — the languages, — again in correspondence with the criterion of the brotherhood of men. (Maybe there would also be a need of teaching Esperanto, if time permitted and the pupils so wished.)

The second method is that of plastic art, drawing, modelling, — the science of how by means of sight to transmit to another what you know.

The third method is music, singing, — the science of transmitting your mood, your sentiment.

Besides these six branches of instruction there ought

to be also introduced a seventh, — the instruction of handicraft, which again answers the criterion of brotherhood, that is, such as all need, — carpentry, cabinet work, sewing.

Thus the instruction divides into seven subjects. What amount of time is to be used for each of these, in addition to the obligatory labour for one's work upon oneself, will be determined by the inclination of every individual pupil.

This is the way I think of it: the instructors arrange the hours for their own convenience, but the pupils are free to come or not.

However strange this may seem to us, who have so distorted education, full liberty of study, that is, the permission given to the pupil to come to study when he wishes, is a *conditio sine qua non* of every fruitful instruction, just as it is a *conditio sine qua non* of nutrition that he who feeds should feel like eating. The only difference is this, that in material matters the harmfulness of a departure from freedom will show itself at once, — there will at once be vomiting or disorder of the stomach, — while in spiritual matters the harmful consequences will not appear so soon, maybe only in years.

Only with complete freedom can the best pupils be brought to the limits which they can reach, and not be kept back for the sake of the weak pupils, and it is these best pupils that are needed most. Only with freedom can we avoid the usual phenomenon, — the dislike for subjects which in their proper time and with freedom of instruction would be liked; only under freedom is it possible to determine for what specialty a pupil has an inclination; it is only freedom that does not impair the educative influence. Or else I shall be telling the pupil that violence must not be used in life, and shall be exerting most grievous mental violence against him. I know that this is difficult; but what is to be done

when you come to understand that every departure from freedom is pernicious for the cause of education itself? But then, it is not so hard, if you fully make up your mind not to do anything foolish. I think it ought to be like this: A gives from two to three o'clock a lesson in mathematics, that is, teaches what the pupil wants to know in this field. B — from three to five o'clock, drawing, and so forth. You will say: "And the youngest?" The youngest, if things are run correctly, always themselves ask for and love accuracy, that is, submit to the hypnosis of imitation: there was a lesson yesterday after dinner, and so he wants a lesson to-day after dinner.

In general, the distribution of time and subjects presents itself to me like this: There are in all sixteen hours of waking. Half of these, with pauses for rest and play (the younger, the longer), I propose for education, in the narrower sense of enlightenment, that is, for work for themselves, their families, and others: cleaning up, carrying, cooking, chopping, etc.

The other half I give to study. I leave the pupil to choose among seven subjects what attracts him. All this, you see, is written at haphazard. God demanding, I will work all this out.

I want to add that I should not advise starting anything new, such as going to another place, or some theoretical predetermination what the school should be; nor should I advise inviting teachers or pupils, but I should advise making use of present conditions, developing the rest, or, rather, letting the rest develop itself.

I will add also something about drawing and music. Piano instruction is a flagrant example of falsely put education. As in drawing, so in music, the children should be taught, by always making use of the most accessible means (in drawing, by means of chalk, crayon, pencil; in music, by means of their throats, to be able

to render what they see and hear). This is a beginning. If afterward — which is a pity — exceptional pupils should develop especial gifts, they may learn to paint with oil-colours and to play on expensive instruments.

I know that there are good, new manuals for teaching this elementary science of drawing and music.

As for the study of languages — the more the better — I think, French and German ought to be taught by all means, and English and Esperanto, if possible. They should be taught by giving them to read a book they know in Russian, trying to make them understand the general sense, here and there paying attention to the most important words, the roots of words, and grammatical forms.

1901.

II.

I HAVE thought a great deal about education. There are questions as to which one arrives at doubtful conclusions, and others as to which the conclusions arrived at are final, and we feel ourselves incapable of either changing them or adding anything to them. They are the following.

Education presents itself as a complex and difficult matter, only so long as we wish, without educating ourselves, to educate our children or any one else. But if we come to understand that we can educate others only through ourselves the question of education is made void, and only the question of life is left, "How must I live myself?" because I do not know a single act in the education of children, which is not included in the education of oneself. How shall we dress, feed, put to bed, and teach children? Just as we do ourselves. If the father and mother dress, eat, sleep with moderation, and work, and study, the children will do the same.

I would give two rules for education: not only live well yourself, but work over yourself, perfecting yourself all the time, and conceal nothing about your life from your children. It is better for the children to know of the weak sides of their parents than that they should feel that their parents have a life which is concealed from them, and another for show. All the difficulties of education arise from this, that the parents, far from mending their faults, or even recognizing them as faults, justify them in themselves and do not want to see these faults

in their children. In this does the whole difficulty and the whole struggle with the children consist. Children are morally much more acute than adults, and they — frequently without saying so or even being conscious of it — see not only the faults of their parents, but even the worst of all faults, their hypocrisy, and so lose respect for them and interest in all their instructions.

The parents' hypocrisy in the education of their children is a most customary phenomenon, and children are sensitive and immediately notice it, and turn away and become corrupt. Truth is the first, most important condition of the actuality of spiritual influence, and so it is a first condition of education. That it may not be terrible to show the children the whole truth of the parents' life, it is necessary for the parents to make their life good, or, at least, less bad. And so the education of others is included in the education of oneself, and nothing else is needed.

Education is the exertion of influence upon the heart of those whom we educate. But we can exert an influence upon the heart only by means of hypnotization, to which children are so subject, — by the infectiousness of the example. The child sees that I am irritated and insult people, that I make others do what I can do myself, that I pamper my greed, my lusts, that I avoid work for others and seek only for pleasures, that I am proud and vain of my position, that I speak ill of others, that I do not say the same thing of a man behind his back that I say to his face, that I pretend to believe in what I do not believe in, and thousands and thousands of such acts, or the opposite acts, such as spring from meekness, humility, industry, self-sacrifice, abstinence, truthfulness, — and he is infected by either a hundred times more powerfully than by the most eloquent and sensible of instructions. And so all or nine hundred and

ninety-nine thousandths of education reduces itself to the example, the correction and perfection of our life.

So that, what we began with within ourselves, when we dreamed of an ideal, that is, of the good, the attainment of which is possible only within ourselves, is what we are brought to now in the external education of children. What we wished for ourselves, without knowing well why we wanted it, is now indispensably needed by us, in order that we may not corrupt our children.

Of education we generally demand too much and too little. It is impossible to demand that the pupils to be educated should learn this or that, should become cultured, — as we understand culture, — and it is equally impossible for them to become moral, as we understand the word. But it is quite possible for us not to be participants in the corruption of the children (and in this a husband cannot interfere with his wife, nor a wife with her husband), but with our whole life and to the best of our ability to act upon them, infecting them with the example of goodness.

I think that it is not only difficult, but even impossible, to educate children well, if we are ourselves bad, and that the education of children is only self-perfection, which is not aided by anything so much as by children. How ridiculous are the demands of people who smoke, drink, eat immoderately, do not work, and turn night into day, that the doctor should make them well, in spite of their unhealthy mode of life! Just as ridiculous are the demands of people that they be taught how, continuing to lead an immoral life, they may be able to give their children a moral education. All education consists in a greater and ever greater consciousness of our own errors and in our mending them. This anybody can do under all possible conditions of life. This is the most powerful tool given to man for the purpose of acting upon other men, among them upon his children, who are always

involuntarily nearest of all to him. *Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra* refers most of all to education.

I spoke yesterday about education. Why do parents send their children away from home to a gymnasium? It suddenly became clear to me.

If the parents kept them at home, they would see the consequences of their immoral lives in their children. They would see themselves in their children as in a mirror. The father drinks wine at dinner with his friends, and his son is in a saloon. The father is at a ball, and his son is at an evening entertainment. The father does nothing, and so the son does nothing, But send him to the gymnasium, and the mirror in which the parents see themselves is veiled.

Living a corrupt, inabstemious, idle life, disrespectful of other people, the parents always demand of their children abstinence, activity, respect for people. But the language of life, of the example, is heard and seen from afar, and is clear to the old and the young, to our own and to strangers.

The thing is that, whether for the external success of the matter a loving (and not a violent) treatment of the pupils is advantageous or not, you cannot treat them differently. The one thing which may be said for certain is, that the good awakens the good in the hearts of men and certainly produces this action, even though it is not visible.

One such drama, that you will go away from your pupils, that you will weep (if they find it out), will leave in the hearts of the pupils greater, more important traces than hundreds of lessons.

Terrible is the corruption of the mind to which, for personal purposes, the authorities subject the children

during their education. The reign of conscious materialism is explained only by this. Such nonsense is impressed upon a child, that afterward the materialistic, limited, false comprehension, which is not carried to its conclusions, of those who arraign the incorrectness of the comprehension presents itself as a vast acquisition of reason.

Every man lives only for the purpose of manifesting his individuality.

Education (the education of the present) wipes it out.

They were talking to-day about a boy with vicious inclinations, who was driven out of school, and that it would be well to send him to a school of correction.

It is precisely the same that is done by a man who lives a bad, unwholesome life, and who, when he is overtaken by disease, turns to the doctor to be cured by him and does not even consider that his disease is a beneficent indicator for him that his whole life is bad and that it ought to be changed.

The same is true of the diseases of our society. Every sick member of this society reminds us of the fact that the whole life of society is irregular and that it ought to be changed, but we imagine that for every such a sick member there is and ought to be an institution which would free us from this member or which would even correct him.

Nothing hinders so much the forward movement of humanity as this false conviction. The sicker society is, the more there are institutions for the cure of symptoms, and the less care is there for the change of the whole life.

It is terrible to look at what the rich people do with their children.

When one of them is young and foolish and impas-

sioned, he is drawn into a life which is lived upon the backs of other people, is taught this life, and then, when he is tied hand and foot by temptations, — when he cannot live otherwise than demanding for himself the work of others, — his eyes are opened (the eyes open themselves), and — get out the best way you can: either become a martyr, renouncing everything you are used to and cannot live without, or be a liar.

Children are good for this reason also, that they have no business and are only concerned about passing the day well. It is thus that they ought to be educated; but we hasten to teach them business, that is, instead of the eternal work before God and their conscience, to do the work which is established by certain people by agreement as play.

If I had to choose, — to people the earth with such saints as I am at all able to imagine, but with no children, or with such people as we have nowadays, but with constantly new accretions of children fresh from God, — I would choose the latter.

One needs but busy oneself with education in order to see one's shortcomings. If you see them, you begin to mend them. And mending oneself is the best means for educating one's own and other people's children and grown people.

I have just read N——'s letter in which he says that medical help does not present itself to him as something good, that the continuation of many useless lives for many hundreds of years is much less important than the feeblest blowing upon the spark of divine love in the heart of another. In this blowing lies the whole art of education. But to fan it in others, we must first fan it in ourselves.

The teacher complained that A—— is a poor pupil, because he cannot explain in words and write out an arithmetical problem. I said that the demand for an explanation is a demand for a senseless memorizing,— the boy has comprehended, but is not yet able to find words. He agreed with me, and said: "Yes, we teachers are obliged to make the pupils learn by heart the very form. For example, we teach that every discussion of a problem must begin with the word *if*." If I were told that this is the way they taught in Japan one thousand years ago, I should have hardly believed it; but this is done among us by the fresh fruits of the university.

The word is one of the most natural, most widely diffused, and easiest ways for the transmission of thought. Unfortunately it is also the most deceptive, and so in education, where deception is most dangerous and the deception is always very easily discovered by the children, the most effective and best means, which excludes the possibility of deception, often involuntary deception, has always been and always will be the personal example of the educator's life. . . . The person's example and life includes also the word. The example teaches how to live and speak. But the word does not include the example.

To educate well, we must live well before those whom we educate. And so we must be as pure and truthful as possible also in relation to the question of sexual intercourse: if we consider sexual intercourse a sin and live chastely, it is possible for us and necessary to preach chastity to the children; if we strive after chastity, without attaining it, we should tell the children so. But if we live unchastely and cannot and will not live otherwise, we shall involuntarily conceal this from the children and shall not tell them so. Even so people do.

The children say: "The parents say that their children torment them; if they only knew how the parents torment their children: coquetry, and quarrels, and meanness, and inequality of love, and injustice, and all the vices of those who in the opinion of the children ought to be faultless."

I have constantly occasion to interpret upwards now this, now that, utterance of the Gospel. Thus I just now esteem more especially the hint as to the sanctity of the children and as to our terrible sin of offending them, when, without noticing it, we make concessions, compromise with our soul, and do not repent, but even justify ourselves.

If we should make it our problem to mix up a man, so that he might not be able with his common sense to get away from the two opposite world-conceptions inculcated upon him since childhood, nothing more powerful could be invented than what is done to every young man who is educated in our so-called Christian society. On one side he is taught to weigh and verify everything critically, to take nothing on faith, and is shown how the superstitions of antiquity slowly melt before the light of science, how everything which a man knows must be based on reason, and side by side with that he is offered a faith which not only has no explanations whatever, but even offers an explanation the foundation of which, like the dogma of the Trinity and others, directly contradicts reason.

Public education, such as it is with us, is directly and very artfully organized for the moral corruption of the children. And so I think it right to make all possible sacrifices so as not to subject the children to this corrupting influence. But with the present arrangement of the

schools there is even no need of making great sacrifices, since the instruction in the schools is so bad that cultured parents can give more information in much shorter time. All this I say in cases where the parents are at one.

Our life, to be full, must by all means have two sides: the fulfilment of life itself for our own sake, and the influence upon people, — for the change of their false life, — the sermon.

You have both sides. I say and think, and people think of me, that I have an influence upon people by means of my preaching: they print and read me in all languages. But you have children who will take your whole soul into their hearts, will acquire all the thoughts of the best quality, and will for ever carry them into the world, transmitting them to others.

My activity is a loud one, and, therefore, external and doubtful, but yours — upon your children — is quiet, invisible, underground, but irrepressible, eternal, unquestionable, and invaluable. Only look upon them religiously; remember that they are living divine looms, out of which you cannot chop with an axe what you have put into them. God has deprived me of this activity.

. . . The majority of men, not only removed from you, but even near to you in convictions, will not understand your life, will even condemn it; but the children who have grown up with you, if only they always move in an atmosphere of love, will understand you, and in them you will get your reward. Only give them as much liberty and enlightenment as possible, of course, not gymnasium, but Christian enlightenment. I do not know how to do all that, because I have not experienced it myself, but I see the importance and significance of the whole matter. I see that it is more important to send into the world one live man than hundreds of books.

Education, the transmission of knowledge, is real when it transmits the important, necessary contents (moral instruction) in a clear, rational, comprehensible form (science), and so that it charms, infects, attracts by its sincerity him to whom it is transmitted (art).

But with us the moral religious instruction is transmitted without clearness and without sincerity, — our religious instruction; science without moral contents is again given separately; and art, — nothing but attractiveness, — again separately.

I cannot rejoice in the birth of children of the wealthy classes, — they breed drones.

Every child of the well-to-do classes is by his very education put in the position of a rascal who by means of a dishonourable life is to provide himself with at least five hundred roubles per year.

At first I thought that the ability to learn was a sign of dulness, a paradox, but I really did not believe it, because I myself did not study well; but now I am convinced that it is the truth and that it cannot be otherwise. In order to receive other people's ideas one must not have any of one's own.

Somnambulists learn best of all.

It has for a long time been my opinion that, as it is not only useless, but even harmful, to fill the stomach which does not demand any food, so it is useless and always harmful to transmit knowledge by force, and not for the purpose of satisfying the demands of the learner. This opinion long ago became an undoubted truth to me, and I am glad to find this fundamental truth in Schultz's teaching.

It is impossible to imagine anything more terrible than those crimes which are committed in these dens (the military institutions of learning). Here, in these places, are not only confirmed all these horrors, tortures, murders, robberies, which are committed in the world, but directly, in the most impudent manner and systematically, the souls of all adolescent young men are ruined.

Is female education good? Yes. Are the university lectures good? No. Why? Because, like any school, they put men in a condition which is most susceptible of hypnosis. The true, not injurious education every man acquires by himself, that is, not by himself, but with the aid of God.

There are three pedagogical branches, because there are three kinds of reasoning: (1) the logical, (2) the experimental, (3) the artistic. The sciences, study, are nothing but the acquisition of what wise men thought before us. Wise men have always thought in these three ways: they either made logical deductions from the propositions of thought; or they observed, and, segregating the phenomenon under observation from all the rest, made their deductions as to the causes and results of the phenomena; or they described what they saw, knew, and imagined. More briefly: (1) they thought, (2) observed, and (3) expressed. And so there are three kinds of sciences: (1) the mathematical, (2) the experimental, and (3) the languages.

III.

. . . WHEN I received your letter, I immediately decided that I would try in the best way possible to answer your first question, which is of prime importance and which has interested me without cessation; but various causes have so far kept me back, and I am only now able to satisfy your wish and mine.

From the time — beginning twenty years ago — that I came to see clearly how humanity must and should live happily, and how senselessly, tormenting itself, it ruins generation after generation, I kept removing farther and farther the radical cause of this madness and this ruin: at first I found this cause in the false economic structure, then in governmental violence, which maintains this order; but now I have come to the conclusion that the fundamental cause of everything is to be found in the false religious doctrine, which is inculcated by means of education.

We have become so used to the religious lie which surrounds us that we do not observe all the horror, stupidity, and cruelty with which the ecclesiastic doctrine is filled. We need only understand clearly what we are doing when we teach our children the so-called law of God, to become frightened at the terrible crime which is committed by such instruction. A pure, innocent, still undeceived and still not deceiving boy comes to us, men of years, who possess or may possess all the knowledge which in our time is accessible to humanity, and asks for those principles by which a man is to be guided in

this life. What do we tell him? Frequently we do not even answer, but only put aside his question, so that he may have a prepared inspired answer, when the question shall arise. We answer his questions with a gross, incoherent, often stupid, and, above all, cruel Jewish legend, which we give him in the original or, still worse, in our own words. We tell him, impressing it upon him as a sacred truth, what we know could not have happened and what has no meaning for us, namely, that six thousand years ago a strange, wild being, whom we call God, took it into His head to create the world, and actually created it and also man; that man sinned, the evil God punished him and all of us for this, then redeemed us from Himself by the death of His son, and that our chief business consists in propitiating this God and freeing ourselves from those sufferings to which He has doomed us. It seems to us that that is all right and is even useful for the child, and we listen in delight as he repeats all these horrors, without considering that terrible transformation, which is unnoticeable to us because it is spiritual and which is taking place in the child's soul. We think that the child's soul is a *tabula rasa*, on which anything we please may be written. But that is not so: the child has a dim conception of what is the beginning of everything, that cause of his existence, that force, in whose power he is, and he has the same high, indefinite, and inexpressible conception, cognized by his whole being, of the beginning, which is proper for all rational men. Suddenly he is told instead that this beginning is nothing but some personal, conceited, terribly evil being, — the Jewish God. The child has a dim and correct idea of the purpose of this life, which he sees in happiness, attainable in a communion of love. Instead of this he is told that the general purpose of life is the will of the conceited God, and that the personal aim of every man is liberation from eternal punishments and torments, deserved by somebody,

which God has imposed upon all men. Every child has also the consciousness of the fact that man's obligations are very complex and lie in the moral sphere. Instead of this he is told that his obligations lie chiefly in blind faith, in prayers, — in the enunciation of certain words at a certain time, in the swallowing of a sop of wine and bread, which is supposed to represent God's blood and body, to say nothing of the images, miracles, immoral Bible stories, which are represented as model acts, or of the Gospel miracles and the whole immoral significance which is ascribed to the Gospel history. It is as though some one should form a complete doctrine out of the cycle of Russian bylínas, with Dobrýnya, Dyuk, and others, with the addition to them of Eruslán Lázarevich, and should give this to his children as rational history. It seems to us that this is not important, and yet this instruction in the so-called law of God, which with us is given to our children, is the most terrible crime which can be imagined. Torture, murder, violence committed upon the children would be nothing in comparison with this crime.

The government, the rulers, the ruling classes, need this deception; with it their power is inseparably connected, and so the ruling classes always want this deception to be practised upon the children and maintained over the adults by means of an increased hypnotization; but the people who do not wish for the maintenance of the false social order, but, on the contrary, for its change, and who, above all else, wish for the good of those children with whom they enter into communion, must with all their strength try to save their children from this terrible deception. And so a complete indifference of the children to religious questions and the rejection of all religious forms is still incomparably better than the Judæo-ecclesiastic instruction, even though in the most perfected forms. It seems to me that for every man who has come to understand the whole significance of the trans-

mission of the false doctrine as sacred history there cannot even be any question as to what he should do, though he may not have any positive religious convictions to transmit to his child. If I know that a deception is a deception, I can under no condition tell the child, who asks me naïvely and confidently, that what I know as a deception is sacred history. It would be better if I could answer truthfully all those questions which the church answers in such a lying way; but if I am not able to do so, I must still abstain from giving out a certain lie as the truth, being confident that nothing but good can come from my sticking to the truth. Besides, it is not true that a man has nothing to tell his child but the positive religious truth which he professes. Every sincere man knows that good, in the name of which he lives. Let him tell that to his child, or life will show it to him, and he will do well and will certainly not do the child any harm. I wrote a little book, called *The Christian Teaching*, in which I wanted to say in the simplest and clearest form what I believe. If I had just now to give to a child the essence of the religious teaching which I consider the truth, I should tell him that we came into this world and live in it, not by our will, but by the will of that which we call God, and that, therefore, we shall fare well only when we shall do this will. But this will consists in this, that we all should be happy. For all of us to be happy there exists but one means: every one of us must act toward others as he would have others act toward him. In reply to the questions as to how the world originated and what awaits us after death, I should answer the first with a confession of my ignorance and the incorrectness of the question (in the whole Buddhist world this question does not exist); the second I should answer with the assumption that the will of Him who called us into this world for our good leads us somewhere through death, no doubt for the same purpose.

December 13, 1899.

LETTERS TO VARIOUS PERSONS

1886 – 1903

LETTERS TO VARIOUS PERSONS

LETTER TO A REVOLUTIONIST

By long and hard experience I have come to the conclusion that it is useless to argue with people who do not see what they cannot help seeing, because such people are not guided in their reflections by the search after truth, but by the defence of their position, their past and present. To argue with such people is the same as arguing with a builder who has erected a house, in which he has put all his pride and his life, and, finding that his angles are not right, does not want to know or see that a right angle is one-half of a straight angle.

He wants the angle which he has built as a right angle to be right, and so he, a clever and serious man, will not and cannot understand the properties of a right angle. The same is true of the retorts which I constantly hear against the indubitable and obvious moral truth of non-resistance to evil, which are raised from two mutually hostile sides, — by the governmental conservatives and by the revolutionists.

One side began to build an obtuse angle, the other for the same reason began to build an acute angle. Both sides are angry at one another, and still more at the L

square, which shows them that they are both wrong. You are defending against obviousness and yourselves the angle which you have started, and which does not agree with the right angle, which you know well. And so I am not going to prove to you what you know as well as I do; but I will ask you for a moment to doubt that everything you have done was precisely what ought to have been done, and that what you intend to do is what ought to be, and from this abstract standpoint to look, say, at the arguments of your letter and their clear and direct purpose.

Your arguments reduce themselves to this, that a man, in the name of the love of men, may and should kill men, because there exist considerations, mysterious to me or else very incomprehensible, in the name of which men have always killed one another, the same by which Caiaphas found it more advantageous to kill Christ only than to ruin the whole nation. The purpose of all these arguments is the justification of murder. You even seem to be indignant, because there are some people who assert that it is never right to kill, just as I found people who were indignant over people who asserted that it was not right to beat women and children.

Humanity lives, the moral consciousness grows in it, at first reaching a point when it sees the moral impossibility of eating one's own parents, then of killing the superfluous children, then of killing captives, then of holding slaves, then of making the members of the family mind by beating them, and then — one of the chief acquisitions of humanity — the impossibility of attaining the aggregate good by means of murder, and in general by means of violence. There are people who have reached this stage of the moral consciousness, and there are people who have not reached it. There is nothing to dispute or argue about. No matter how conclusively it may be proved to me that I shall attain a higher good

for my children and for all of humanity if I teach my children by means of a whip, I shall not be able to do so, just as I cannot kill. All I know is that, just as I cannot fight and beat children, I cannot kill. There is nothing to discuss about. All I can say is, that those who want to defend violence, and especially murder, must not speak of love, just as people who want to prove that the acute angle of their building is a right one must not speak of the perpendicularity of the sides, because, by asserting this, they refute themselves. If we talk at all of love, no examples of robbers will ever lead up to the necessity of killing another, but only to the simplest and most inevitable deduction from love, — to this, that a man will with his body defend another, will give his life for another, but will not take the life of another.

I did not have any intention of arguing, but I seem to have begun to argue. All right, let it be. Your letter not only interested me, but even touched me: under the thick bark (pardon me) of your superstitions I saw a serious mind and a good heart, and I should like fraternally to share with you the conception of life which gives me the good.

You say beautifully that the fundamental commandment is the commandment of love, but you are wrong when you state that all private commandments may impair it. You are here incorrectly confusing two different things, — the commandment not to eat pork and, say, the commandment not to kill. The first may be in disagreement with love, because it has not love for its object. But the second is only an expression of that degree of consciousness which humanity has reached in the definition of love. Love is a very dangerous word. You know that in the name of love for the family very bad acts are committed, in the name of love of country worse ones still, and in the name of love of humanity the most terrible horrors. It has long been known that love gives

the meaning of life, but in what does love consist? This question has continuously been solved by the wisdom of humanity, and always in a negative sense: it turns out that what incorrectly was called and passed under the form of love was not love. To kill people is not love, to torture and beat them in the name of something, to prefer one class to another, is also not love. And the commandment about not resisting evil with violence is a commandment which points out the limit where the activity of love ends. In this matter it is possible to go ahead, but not back, as you wish to do.

Here is a remarkable thing: you, who recognize that the meaning of life is in serving others in the name of love, murmur, because the safe and undoubted path of this service has been pointed out to you, just as though a man should murmur because the correct channel has been determined amidst shoals and submarine rocks. "Why must I be embarrassed? Maybe I shall have to run aground on a shoal." Are you not saying the same, when you are provoked, because it is not right to kill a robber who is supposed to have killed some one? "But if it cannot be otherwise?" Well, if it cannot be otherwise than settling on a shoal? "Maybe I will settle on a shoal, but I cannot help but rejoice at having the path, and I cannot help but wish with all my strength to walk upon it."

You adduce the comparison that the rule about not resisting evil is like the rule about not throwing children out of the window, when such may become a necessity, and from this you conclude that the proposition that it is not right to throw children out of a window is incorrect. It is only he who needs to torture children in general, who is concerned in an activity where this necessity presents itself all the time, that will insist that it is not right to prohibit one from throwing children out of a window, because such a necessity may arise at a fire. Pardon

me, but this is so in our present case. And it is this that is so terrible. You, who are unquestionably a clever man, are going directly against common sense, and, though unquestionably a good and self-sacrificing person, you defend violence and murder.

Violence and murder provoked you, and you were carried away by a natural sentiment, let us say, and began to oppose violence and murder to violence and murder. Such an activity, though closely resembling that of an animal, and being irrational, has nothing senseless or contradictory about it; but the moment the governments or the revolutionists want to justify such activity on rational grounds, there appears the terrifying silliness and the inevitable heaping of sophisms, in order that the stupidity of such an attempt may not be seen. Justifications of this kind are always based on the assumption of that imaginary robber who has in himself nothing that is human, who kills and tortures innocent people, and this imaginary beast, which is constantly in the process of killing the innocent, serves as a foundation for the reflections of all the violators as to the necessity of violence; but such a robber is a most exceptional and rare and even impossible case; many persons may live hundreds of years, as I have lived sixty, without ever running across this fictitious robber in the process of committing his crime. Why should I base my rule of life on this fiction?

When we discuss real life, and not a fiction, we see something quite different: we see people, and even ourselves, perpetrating the most cruel deeds, in the first place not alone, like the fictitious robber, but always in connection with other men, and not because we are beasts, who have nothing that is human, but because we abide in error and in offences. More than that: when we reflect upon life, we see, on the contrary, that the most cruel deeds, like the slaughter of men, dynamite, the gallows,

guillotines, solitary cells, property, courts, power and all its consequences, all have their origin, not in the fictitious robber, but in those men who base their rules of life on the silly fiction of the imaginary beast of a robber. Thus a man who is reflecting upon life cannot help but see that the cause of people's evil does in no way lie in the fictitious robber, but in our own errors and in the errors of others, one of the most cruel of which consists in this, that in the name of the fictitious evil an actual evil is committed, and so such a man, who has directed his activity on the cause of evil, on the eradication of error in himself and in others, and who has devoted his strength to this, will see before himself such a vast and fruitful activity that he will absolutely fail to see what his activity has to do with the fiction of the robber, with whom he will in all probability never fall in. And if he shall, he will in all probability do something quite different from what he will do who, having never seen the robber, bears him a grudge.

Now I beg you to forgive me, if I have written you anything that is blunt, and to try to understand me, where I have not expressed myself precisely; above all, to believe me that I had but one incitement in writing you this letter, — love and respect for you, and the desire to be useful to you. Your loving

1886 (?). Lev Tolstóy.

ON NON-RESISTANCE TO EVIL

YOUR letter gave me much pleasure. What you think about non-resistance to evil is quite correct, as you yourself know. It is at times sad to think that our society is in such deep darkness that it takes great efforts — such as you have made and but few are capable of — in order, on the one hand, to tear oneself away from the nets of formal, false Christianity, and on the other, from the revolutionary liberalism which controls the press, and to understand the simplest truths, such as that two times two are four, in the moral sphere, that is, that we ought not to do the same evil against which we fight. All this apparently complicated proposition about non-resistance to evil and the objection to it reduce themselves to this, that, instead of understanding it, as it is written, "Do not resist evil or violence with evil or violence," they understand (I even think, intentionally) that it says, "Do not resist evil, that is, be indulgent to evil, be indifferent to it;" whereas to resist evil, to struggle against it, is the only external problem of Christianity, and the rule about non-resistance to evil is given as a rule how to struggle in the most successful manner against evil. It says "You are in the habit of struggling against evil by means of violence, or of retribution. This is a bad, a wicked, means. The best means is not to repay except with good." It is as though a man should try to push a door inward, when it opens outward, and another, knowing about it, should say, "Do not push, but pull." But this is so only in our backward cultured society. In

America, for example, this question was worked out from all sides fifty years ago, and it is a shame to talk of it, as though we should have to prove the system of Copernicus to those who deny it, just as Galileo was denied. Thus, on the one hand, I say, I sometimes feel ashamed of our ignorance, and on the other, I see the use of it. He who, like yourself, with his own mind pierces this bark of lies and ignorance, has the earnest of a firmer comprehension of everything connected with this proposition than he for whom it has all been masticated and put into his mouth.

There is, however, one thing in which you are not right, and that is, that you are too timid to follow your reflection in regard to the madmen. In thought not the slightest compromise can be admitted. There will inevitably be a compromise in practice (as you say correctly), and so we must much less admit it in theory. If I want to draw a line which is mathematically approximately straight, I cannot for a second admit that a straight line may not be the shortest distance between two points. If I admit that a madman may be locked up, I must also admit that he may be killed. Why should he suffer? Take the example of a mad dog: we certainly lock it up and kill it.

If I admit that a dangerous madman may be locked up, it will seem possible and even necessary to somebody to have us locked up. And do not be afraid, as you are, of thinking in this direction. If it be right to lock him up, there will be that violence which now causes the world to groan: in Russia there are one hundred thousand prisoners; and if it is not right, what makes it so terrible? Is it that the madman will kill me, you, my daughter, your mother? What is there about it that is terrible? We all may and certainly will die. But we ought not to do any evil. In the first place, madmen rarely kill, and if they do, the subject to be pitied, to be

helped, is not I, who only may be killed, but he, who is certainly distorted and suffering; I must aid him, think of him. If people did not take the liberty for the sake of their safety to lock up and kill those madmen and so-called criminals, they would see to it that no new madmen and criminals be created. As it is, I know of a case of a wild man, a mendicant of forty-five years of age, who tramped with his daughter and did not stay winter nights in houses, and committed rape on his daughter; another case of a boy of eleven years of age, who killed his five-year-old sister and made a candle from her fat, that all the locks during his burglaries might open; a third case of a pupil of my school, who was given into apprenticeship, was taught to drink by his companions, drank until he got a brain disease, was sent to an insane asylum, to relieve his family and those about him, and there died. We all know the Skublínski woman. They will all be sentenced, then they will be locked up, so that they shall not interfere with our producing the like, and then we say that it would be cruel to leave them at large. No, if they were at large, we should have no savages walking under the telephone wires, no boys making candles from their sister's fat, no savages drinking themselves into madness, no Skublínski women.

I shall be very glad to read what you wrote about my story (the *Kreutzer Sonata*). The other day I wrote for it an epilogue, which it seemed necessary to write, because people so boldly pretended that they did not understand what was written there.

God help you to walk on the path on which you are now: it is the only one.

1890.

TWO LETTERS ON HENRY GEORGE

1

In reply to your letter I hasten with the greatest pleasure to say the following:

I have known Henry George ever since the appearance of his *Social Problems.* I read the book and was struck by the correctness of his fundamental idea, and also by the exceptional clearness, popularity, and force of expression, the like of which cannot be found in scientific literature, and especially by that Christian spirit, also exceptional in scientific literature, with which the whole book is permeated. After reading this book, I went back in time and read his *Progress and Poverty* and still more appreciated the significance of Henry George's activity.

You ask for my opinion concerning Henry George's activity and his single-tax system. My opinion concerning these is as follows:

Humanity is all the time moving forward in the sense of elucidating its consciousness and establishing forms of life to correspond to this changing consciousness. And so at every period of humanity's life there is taking place, on the one hand, the process of the elucidation of the consciousness, and, on the other, of the realization in life of what has been elucidated by the consciousness.

At the end of the last and the beginning of the present century there has been taking place in the Christian humanity the process of the elucidation of consciousness as regards the labouring class, which was in various

aspects of slavery, and the process of the establishment of new forms of life to correspond to the elucidated consciousness, — the abolition of slavery and the substitution of free hired labour for it. At the present time there is taking place the process of the elucidation of consciousness in relation to the use of the land, and very soon, it seems to me, there must come the process of the realization of this consciousness in life.

In this very process, both of the elucidation of the consciousness in relation to the use of the land, and also of the realization of this consciousness, which forms one of the chief problems of our time, Henry George has been the leader and guide of the movement. In this does his vast and prime importance consist. With his beautiful books he has contributed to the elucidation of men's consciousness concerning this question and to placing it on a practical basis.

But with the abolition of the revolting right to the ownership of land there is repeated precisely what in my memory took place with the abolition of slavery. The governments and the ruling classes, knowing that with the land question is connected their advantageous and prominent position in society, make it appear that they are concerned about the people's welfare and establish working men's banks, inspections, income taxes, and even an eight-hour day, but carefully ignore the land question, and with the aid of their subservient science, which proves everything they want, assert that the expropriation of the land is useless, harmful, impossible. Precisely the same is repeated as in the case of slavery. The men of the beginning of the present and the end of the last century for a long time felt that slavery was a terrible anachronism, which was revolting to the heart; but the quasi-religion and science proved that there was nothing bad in slavery, that it was necessary, or, at least, that it was still untimely to abolish it. Now the same is repeated

in relation to the ownership of land. The quasi-religion and quasi-science prove in the same way that there is nothing bad in the ownership of land and that there is no need whatever of abolishing it.

It would seem that it ought to be clear to every cultured man of our time that the exclusive right to the land held by men who do not work it and who deprive hundreds and thousands of needy families of access to it, is just as bad and mean a business as the ownership of slaves; and yet we see cultured, refined aristocrats, English, Austrian, Prussian, Russian, who make use of this cruel and mean right, and not only are not ashamed of it, but even boast of it. Religion blesses such a possession, and the science of political economy proves that this must be so for the greatest good of men.

Henry George deserves credit not only for having shattered those sophisms by means of which religion and science justify the ownership of land, and to have carried the question to the highest degree of clearness, where it is impossible not to recognize the illegality of ownership of land, except by closing one's ears, but also in this, that he was the first to indicate the possibility of solving this question. He was the first to give a clear and direct answer to those customary objections made by the enemies of any progress, which are that the demands of progress are impractical, inapplicable dreams.

Henry George's project destroys this objection, by putting the question in such a way that to-morrow committees may be assembled for investigation and discussion of the project and for its transformation into a law. In Russia, for example, the discussion of the question of the purchase of the land, or of its seizure without any payment, for the purpose of its nationalization, may be begun to-morrow, and the question may in various circuitous ways be solved exactly as thirty-three years ago was solved the question of the liberation of the peasants.

The people have been shown the necessity of changing the situation, and the possibility of it has been shown to them (there may be changes and corrections in the system of the single tax, but the fundamental idea is practicable), and so they cannot help doing what their reason demands of them. All that is necessary is for this idea to become public opinion; for it to become public opinion, it is necessary to diffuse and elucidate it, — exactly what you are doing, and in that I sympathize with you with all my heart and wish you success.

2

Henry George's project consists in this:

The advantages and conveniences of the use of land are not everywhere the same; and since for more fertile, convenient tracts, which are close to well-settled places, there will always be many who will want them, — and the more there are who want them the better and more advantageous the tracts are, — it is necessary to estimate the value of all such tracts in accordance with the advantages which they offer: the more advantageous, higher, the less advantageous, lower. But such land as is not desired by many is not to be valued at all, and is to be left gratuitously to those who want to work it personally.

With such a valuation of the land it will happen, for example with us, in the Government of Túla, that field-land will be valued at about five or six roubles per desyatína, garden-land near settlements at about ten roubles per desyatína, meadow-land at about fifteen roubles, and so forth. But in the city the desyatína will be valued at one hundred and at five hundred roubles, and in Moscow and St. Petersburg, in a busy place, and near the harbours of navigable streams, as high as thousands and tens of thousands of roubles per desyatína.

Having thus valued the land in the whole country, Henry George proposes to announce a law that, beginning with such a year and day, the land will not belong to any one in particular, but to the whole country, the whole nation, and that, therefore, every one who owns land must pay the country for it, that is, must pay to the whole nation as much as it has been valued at. This income is to be used for all public works of the state, so that it will take the place of all the taxes and all domestic and foreign customs revenues. From this project it would follow that a landed proprietor who now owns two thousand desyatínas might continue to own them, but would have to pay to the treasury, in Túla Government, between twelve and fifteen thousand per year, because there would be in the estate meadow and field land, and not one proprietor would be able to make such payments, and they would refuse to hold the land. But a Túla peasant in the same locality would pay about two roubles less per desyatína than what he is paying now, and he would always have free land about him, which he could take at five or six roubles, and, besides, he would have to pay no other taxes, and would get all commodities, whether domestic or foreign, without paying any dues. In the cities the owners of houses and factories might continue to own their properties, but would have to pay into the common treasury for the land occupied by them to the extent to which it is valued.

The advantage of such an arrangement will consist in this:

(1) That there will be no men who are deprived of the possibility of using land.

(2) That there will be no idle men, who own land and compel others to work for the right to use the land.

(3) That the land will be in the hands of those who work it, and not of those who do not work.

(4) That the people, having the possibility of working the land, will no longer sell themselves into slavery in

the factories and plants, and as servants in the cities, but will scatter in the country.

(5) That there will be no inspectors and collectors of taxes in factories, establishments, and custom-houses, but only rent-collectors for the land, which cannot be stolen and from which it is very easy to collect the rent.

And (6) above all else, that the people who do not work will be free from the sin of exploiting somebody else's labour, for which they are frequently not to blame, since they have been brought up in idleness from childhood and do not know how to work, and from the still greater sin of every lie and subterfuge for justifying themselves in this sin; and that the working people will be freed from the offence and sin of envy and malice toward the people of leisure, and of condemnation of them, and that one of the causes of the division of men will be destroyed.

1893 (?).

LETTER TO A POLE

MARIAN ÉDMUNDOVICH: — I have received your letter and have hastened to read your article in the *Northern Messenger*. Thank you very much for having pointed it out to me. The article is beautiful, and I learned from it much that is new and a joy to me. I learned also about Mickiewicz and Towianski. I used to ascribe their religious mood to the qualities which these two people alone possessed, but from your article I learned that they were only the originators of the true Christian movement, which, having been evoked by patriotism, continues until the present time, and is profoundly touching in its exaltation and sincerity.

My article, *Patriotism and Christianity*, called forth very many retorts. Philosophers and publicists, Russian, French, German, Austrian, retorted to me, and so do you. And all the retorts, like yours, reduce themselves to this, that my condemnations of patriotism are just only in relation to bad patriotism, but have no foundation, if referred to good and useful patriotism; but in what this good and useful patriotism consists and in what way it differs from the bad patriotism, no one has so far taken the trouble to explain.

You write in your letter that "besides the patriotism of conquest and of the hatred of man, characteristic of the powerful nations, there exists also an entirely different patriotism of the enslaved nations, who are striving after the defence of their native faith and tongue against the enemy." You define good patriotism by this condition

of oppression. But oppression or the power of the nations does not make any difference in the essence of what is called patriotism. A fire will always be a burning and dangerous fire, whether it burns in a pyre or glows in a match. By patriotism is generally understood a preferential love for one's own nation, just as by egoism is understood a preferential love for one's own personality. It is hard to imagine how such a preference of one nation over another can be considered a good, and so a desirable, quality. If you say that patriotism is more excusable in an oppressed person than in the oppressor, just as the manifestation of egoism is more excusable in a man who is being strangled than in one who is not troubled by any one, it will not be possible not to agree with you; but patriotism cannot change its quality, according to whether it is manifested in the oppressed man or in the oppressor. This quality, — the preference of one nation over all the others, — like egoism, can never be good.

But patriotism is not only a bad quality, — it is also an irrational doctrine.

By the word "patriotism" is meant not only an immediate, involuntary love of one's nation and preference of it over all the others, but also the doctrine that such a love and preference are good and useful. Such a doctrine is particularly irrational among the Christian nations.

It is irrational, not only because it contradicts the fundamental meaning of Christ's teaching, but also because Christianity, attaining in its own way all that toward which patriotism is striving, makes patriotism superfluous, unnecessary, and interfering, like a lamp in daylight.

A man who, like Krasinski, believes that "God's church is not this or that place, not this or that rite, but the whole planet, and all imaginable relations of individuals and nations among themselves," can no longer be a patriot, because he will in the name of Christianity perform all those things which patriotism can ask of him. Patriotism,

for example, asks of its disciple that he sacrifice his life for the good of his countrymen; but Christianity demands a similar sacrifice of one's life for the good of all men, and so such a sacrifice is so much more natural for the men of one's own nation.

You write of those terrible acts of violence which the savage, stupid, and cruel Russian authorities are perpetrating on the faith and language of the Poles, and this you adduce as some kind of a reason for a patriotic activity. But I do not see it. To be indignant at such acts of violence and to counteract them with our whole might, we need not be a Pole or a patriot, but only a Christian.

In the given case, for example, I, who am not a Pole, will vie with any Pole as to the degree of my disgust and indignation on account of the savage and stupid measures of the people connected with the government, which are practised against the faith and language of the Poles; I will also vie with any one in the desire to counteract these measures, not because I love Catholicism more than any other religion, or the Polish language more than any other, but because I try to be a Christian. And so, to prevent these things from happening in Poland, or in Alsace, or in Bohemia, we do not need the diffusion of patriotism, but the diffusion of true Christianity.

We can say that we do not care to know Christianity, and then we can laud patriotism; but the moment we recognize Christianity, or even the consciousness of the equality of men and the respect for human dignity which arise from it, there is no place left for patriotism. What surprises me more than anything else in connection with it, is this, how it is that the advocates of patriotism in the oppressed nation, no matter how perfect and refined they may take it to be, do not see how harmful patriotism is for their own purposes.

In the name of what have all these acts of violence been perpetrated on language and faith in Poland, the

Baltic Provinces, Alsace, Bohemia, against the Jews in Russia, wherever such acts have been committed? Only in the name of that patriotism which you defend.

Ask our savage Russifiers of Poland and of the Baltic Provinces, and the persecutors of the Jews, why they do all that they do? They will tell you that this is done for the defence of their own faith and language; they will tell you that, if they do not do so, they will cause their own faith and language to suffer, — the Russians will turn Poles, Germans, Jews.

If there existed no doctrine as to patriotism being something good, there would never exist, at the end of the nineteenth century, men so base as to have courage to do all the base things which they are doing now.

But now the learned — the most savage persecutor of faith in your country is an ex-professor — have a point of support in patriotism. They know history, they know about all those useless horrors of the persecutions of language and faith, but thanks to the doctrine about patriotism, they have a justification.

Patriotism gives them a point of support, while Christianity takes it away from under their feet. And so the conquered nations, which are suffering from oppression, must destroy patriotism, tear down its theoretical foundations, ridicule it, and not extol it.

In defending patriotism, people speak of the individuality of the nationalities, saying that patriotism has for its aim the salvation of the individuality of the nation, and the individuality of the nations is assumed as an indispensable condition of progress. But, in the first place, who has said that this individuality is an indispensable condition of progress? This has not been proved in any way, and we have no right to accept this arbitrary proposition as an axiom. In the second place, even if we admit that this is so, the nation's means for manifesting its individuality will not consist in trying to manifest it,

but, on the contrary, in forgetting its individuality and employing all its forces to do what it feels itself most competent to do and most destined for, just as the individual man will manifest his individuality, not by caring for it, but by forgetting it and employing all his forces and abilities in doing that toward which he is drawn by his nature. It is the same as that people who are working for the support of their community should be doing all kinds of work in all kinds of places. Let each do what is most necessary for the community, according to the best of his strength and knowledge, and let him work with all his might, and they will all involuntarily work differently with different instruments and in different places.

One of the most common of the sophisms which are used for the defence of what is immoral consists in intentionally confusing what is with what ought to be, and in beginning to speak of one thing and then substituting another for it. This sophism is most frequently employed in relation to patriotism. It is this, that a Pole is nearer and dearer than any one else to a Pole, a German to a German, a Russian to a Russian. We have also this, that in consequence of historical causes and bad education, the men of one nation experience unconsciously ill-will toward the people of another nation. All this exists, but the recognition of what exists, like the recognition of the fact that every man loves himself more than any one else, can nowise prove that this must be so. On the contrary: the whole work of all humanity and of every individual man consists only in suppressing these predilections and ill-wills, in struggling against them, and in acting consciously toward other nations and toward the people of other nations just as one would act in relation to his countrymen. It is quite superfluous for us to trouble ourselves about patriotism, as about a feeling which it is desirable to educate in every man. God, or Nature, has

without us taken care of this feeling so that it is inherent in every man, and we have no need to trouble ourselves about educating it in ourselves and in others. What we ought to trouble ourselves about is not patriotism, but how to introduce into life the light which is within us, and thus to change it and bring it nearer to the ideal which stands before us. This ideal, which at the present time is standing before every man, who is enlightened with the true light of Christ, does not consist in the reëstablishment of Poland, Bohemia, Ireland, Armenia, and not in the preservation of the unity and greatness of Russia, England, Germany, Austria, but, on the contrary, in the destruction of this unity and greatness of Russia, England, and Germany, in the abolition of all those force-using, anti-Christian combinations, called states, which are in the way of all true progress and beget the sufferings of the oppressed and vanquished nations, — all that evil, from which modern humanity is suffering. This destruction is possible only through real enlightenment, through the recognition that, before being Russians, Poles, Germans, we are men, disciples of the same teacher, the sons of the same father, brothers among ourselves, — and this was understood by the best representatives of the Polish people, as you have beautifully shown in your article. And this is from day to day understood by an ever greater number of men.

Thus the days of governmental violence are counted, and the liberation of not only the conquered nations, but also of the oppressed labourers is near, if we ourselves are not going to defer the time of this liberation by participating in words and deeds in the governments' acts of violence. But the recognition of patriotism, no matter of what kind, as a good quality, and the incitement of the nation to it, are among the chief impediments in the attainment of the ideals which are standing before us.

I thank you once more for your kind letter, and the

excellent article, and for the opportunity which you gave me once more to verify, think out, and express my ideas on patriotism. Accept the assurance of my respect.

September 10, 1895.

RELATION TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE EXISTING ORDER

1

(From a private letter, 1896)

The existing order of life is subject to destruction. This is admitted both by those who strive to destroy it and those who defend it.

The competitive order is to be destroyed and to give way to the communistic; the capitalistic order is to be destroyed and to give way to the socialistic; the order of militarism is to be destroyed and to give way to disarmament and arbitration; the separatism of the narrow nationality is to be destroyed and to give way to cosmopolitism and a universal brotherhood; all religious superstitions are to be destroyed and to give way to a rational religious, moral consciousness; every kind of despotism is to be destroyed and to give way to liberty; in short, violence is to be destroyed and to give way to a free and loving union of men.

So far two means have been employed for the attainment of all these ends, — the first, the violent revolutions, the overthrow of the men who supported the undesirable order, and the substitution of others, who were to establish a new, desirable order of life; and the other, which, without destroying the existing order, and entering into the ranks of the government, consists in slowly and by degrees obtaining that change of the existing order which is demanded by the human consciousness of our time.

The first method does not attain its end, because, in the first place, every violent destruction of the existing order evokes in the majority of indifferent people a reaction, a desire at all costs to retain the existing order, and even the one which existed before, when there were no perturbations, and so it calls forth a reaction, which only removes the attainment of the end. In the second place, because the men who enter into the power, while retaining the old governmental machine of violence, very soon become just as despotic, sometimes even more despotic than those which are overthrown. (The reaction of the great French Revolution against the despotism of the royal power, the Napoleonic reaction and that of the year '15, the reactions after the years '30, '48, and '81 in Russia, and now the reaction after the anarchistic explosions and murders in France.)

The second method, which consists in changing the government, by taking part in it and improving it, still less attains its end, because not only the men who enter into the ranks of the government without the aim of a gradual improvement of the existing order, but also those who recognize the government and enjoy the advantages of the government only in order to be able to modify and improve it, imperceptibly to themselves, very soon and inevitably (because their whole life is based on governmental violence) become, not only no correctors and changers of the government's violence, but even the most ardent defenders of the same. It is the same as though a man who undertakes to mend a boat should sit down in it and row.

In the course of several generations men, having come to see the falseness of their situation, have been trying to change it, now with one means, and now with another, but neither means produces any effect, and the situation is growing worse and worse.

There exists one means for the attainment of this end, — a very simple and natural means, which consists in

leaving the state and the government alone and not thinking of them, but in thinking only of our life, in elucidating to ourselves the end and significance of our life, and in leading our life in conformity with the elucidated consciousness. And, strange to say, this means — which entirely leaves out the questions about state, government, society — is the only one which solves (and in the most incontestable manner at that) all the political, governmental, and social questions.

This means, in relation to the political, governmental, and social questions, consists, instead of forcibly destroying the existing order of life, or, with the desire to destroy or change it, building our life upon it, in the simplest kind of a method, which, it would seem, would be the first to occur to people, — namely, in taking no part in that violence-using structure of life which we deny and wish to change.

In order not to take part in this violence-using and false structure of life, we must (1) clearly understand the meaning and destiny of our life, (2) clearly understand what in our life corresponds to the destiny of our life, and (3) know those means with which it is possible for us to harmonize our life with the demands of our consciousness.

2

(From the diary of 1895)

The situation of the majority of men, enlightened with a true enlightenment of brotherly love, who are now suppressed by the deceit and cunning of the violators, through their compelling this majority to ruin itself, is terrible and seems hopeless.

Only two ways out present themselves, and both are closed: one consists in rending violence by means of violence, terrorism, dynamite bombs, daggers, as did our nihilists and anarchists, — outside of us to break up that

plot of the governments against the nations; or to enter into a concerted action with the government, making concessions to it, and, taking part in it, slowly to disentangle the net which binds the nation, and to free it. Both ways out are closed.

Dynamite and the dagger, as experience shows us, only provoke reaction, impair the most precious force, — the only one which is in our power, — public opinion.

The other way out is closed because the governments have already found out to what extent the participation of people wishing to transform it should be admitted. They allow only that which does not impair the essentials, and are very sensitive in regard to what is detrimental for them, — they are sensitive, because their existence is at stake. They admit people who do not agree with them and who wish to reform the governments, not only in order to satisfy the demands of these people, but for their own sakes, for the sake of the governments. These people would be dangerous to the governments if they were left outside the governments and rose against them, by influencing the only, most powerful governmental instrument, — public opinion, — and so they have to make these men harmless, attract them by means of concessions, made by the government, — they must make them harmless, something like the microbe cultures, — and then only use them for the purpose of serving the government's ends, that is, for the purpose of oppressing and exploiting the masses.

Both ways out are solidly and impermeably closed. What is left?

It is impossible to break open a way with violence, — you only increase the reaction; equally impossible it is to enter the ranks of the government, — one becomes a tool of the government. One thing is left, — to struggle against the government with the instrument of thought, of words, of acts, — of life, without making any conces-

sions to it, without entering its ranks, without increasing its force through us.

This one thing is necessary and will certainly be successful. And God wants it, and Christ taught it.

3

(From the diary of 1895)

We have come to such a pass that a simply good and sensible man cannot be a partaker in the government, that is, cannot be one — I am not speaking of Russia — cannot in England be one with the landownership, the exploitation of the factories and capitalists, the orders in India, the flogging, the opium trade, the annihilation of nationalities in Africa, the preparations for war, and the wars themselves.

And the point of support, when a man says, "I do not know anything about the government, and I do not care to know; but I know that I cannot live contrary to my conscience," — that point of view is imperturbable, and upon it ought all the men of our time to stand, in order to move life forward. "I know what my conscience commands me to do, but you, people who are busy with the government, arrange the government as you wish, so that it may correspond to the demands of the conscience of the people of our time."

Meanwhile the people occupy the standpoint of the correction and improvement of the governmental forms, and thus, by recognizing the necessity of the government, lose their imperturbable point of support.

LETTER TO THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND TO THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE

DEAR SIR: — I write to you, as man to man, with a feeling of respect and good-will, which I ask you to show also to my letter. Comprehension and agreement are possible only when these sentiments are sincere.

What I have in mind is the persecutions to which the officers of your ministry subject such persons as have my writings which are prohibited in Russia, and give them to read to those who ask for them. So far as I know, many different persons have been subjected to such persecutions. One of the latest cases was that of a lady physician, Mrs. N——, of Túla, who was searched and put in jail, and now is under trial before the investigating magistrate, being accused of spreading my writings.

This case of Mrs. N——, who is no longer a young woman, and is of feeble health, extremely nervous, and highly respectable as regards her spiritual qualities, which have earned her the love of all those who know her, is particularly striking.

So far as I know, this is what served as the cause of it: Mrs. N—— is a good acquaintance of mine and a friend of my daughters. A Túla labourer wrote to me several times, asking me to give him my work, *My Religion*, to read. As I did not have a copy of it to spare and did not know the man, I left several of his letters unanswered. When this winter I again received a letter from him, asking for the same, I turned the letter over to my daughter, asking her, if she had the book for which he

asked, to send it to him. My daughter, who did not have a copy to spare and recalled the fact that Mrs. N—— lived in the same city of Túla, from which the petitioner had written, and had some of my forbidden writings, sent the petitioner her card, with the request that the bearer be given whatever she had. This request of my daughter, addressed to Mrs. N——, served as a cause for her arrest and for all those torments to which she has been subjected.

I think that such measures are irrational, useless, cruel, and, above all, unjust. They are irrational, because there is no explanation, and there can be none, why, out of those thousands of people who have my writings and give them to their friends to read, this one Mrs. N—— should be selected for persecution. These measures are useless, because they attain no end: they do not stop anything, because the evil which it is supposed to stop continues to exist among thousands of men, whom it is impossible to have all arrested and kept in prisons. These measures are cruel, because for many feeble and nervous people, such as Mrs. N—— is, domiciliary visits, inquests, and especially imprisonment, may be the causes of severe nervous diseases, as was the case with Mrs. N——, and even of death. Above all else, these measures are in the highest degree unjust, because they are not directed against the person from which proceeds that which by the government is considered to be an evil.

Such a person in the given case am I: I write those books, and in writing and through oral intercourse disseminate those ideas which the government considers to be an evil, and so, if the government wants to counteract the dissemination of this evil, it must direct upon me all the measures now used by it against those persons who accidentally fall under its influence, and who are guilty but of this, that they have some forbidden books in which they are interested, and that they give these to their

friends to read. The government ought to act thus also for this other reason, that I not only do not conceal this my activity, but, on the contrary, in this very letter announce that I have written and disseminated those books which are considered harmful by the government, and that I continue to write and disseminate, in books, in letters, and in conversations, just such ideas as those which are expressed in my books.

The essence of these ideas is this, that the unquestionable law of God, which stands higher than all human laws, was revealed to men; according to it we must all stop warring and doing violence to one another, and should, on the contrary, aid one another, — we must act toward others as we would have others act toward us.

These ideas, with the practical deductions from them, I have expressed in my books, and am trying still more clearly and more accessibly to express in a book which I am writing now. The same ideas I express in conversations and in letters which I write to friends and to strangers. The same ideas I express even now to you, in pointing out those cruelties and acts of violence, which are contrary to God and which are committed by the officers of your ministry.

Gamaliel's words, which were said concerning the dissemination of the Christian teaching, "If this thing is from men, it will be destroyed, and if it is from God, you cannot destroy it; beware, therefore, lest you become an adversary of God," will always remain a lesson of true governmental wisdom in its relation to the manifestation of the spiritual activity of men. If this activity is spurious, it falls of itself; if it has God's work for its contents, like that God's work of our time which strives to substitute the principle of rational love for that of violence, no external conditions can either accelerate or retard its completion. If the government shall permit the unhampered dissemination of these ideas, they will

spread slowly and evenly; if the government shall, as it does now, subject to persecution those men who have made these ideas their own and transmit them to others, the dissemination of these ideas will be diminished amidst timid, weak, and unsettled men to the extent to which it will be intensified among strong, energetic, and settled men. And so the process of the dissemination of the truth will not stop or be arrested or be accelerated, no matter how the government may act.

Such, in my opinion, is the general and invariable law of the dissemination of truth, and so the wisest thing the government can do in relation to the manifestation of undesirable ideas is not to undertake anything, still more, not to use such unworthy, cruel, and obviously unjust measures as the tormenting of people, only because they are doing what tens of thousands of men have been doing, without being persecuted for it.

But if the government insists on not being inactive, and on punishing, threatening, and abating what it considers to be an evil, the least irrational and the least unjust thing it can do consists in directing all the measures for punishing, threatening, and abating the evil against what by the government is considered to be its source, that is, against me, the more so, since I declare in advance that I will continue without cessation to do until my death what the government considers to be an evil, but what I consider to be my sacred duty before God.

Do not imagine, I beg you, that in asking you to direct against me the measures of violence which have been employed against some of my acquaintances, I assume that the employment of such measures against me presents any difficulties for the government, — that my popularity and my social standing defend me against domiciliary visits, inquests, deportation, imprisonment, and other worse acts of violence. Not only do I not think so, but I am also convinced that if the government

shall act with determination against me, will deport or imprison me, or will apply even severer measures, this will not offer any especial difficulties, and public opinion will not be provoked, nay, the majority of men will fully approve of such a mode of action and will say that that ought to have been done long ago.

God knows that, writing this letter, I am not submitting to any desire to dare the government or to have something to say, but that it is called forth by a moral necessity which consists in taking the guilt off innocent people for acts committed by me, and, above all, is written in order to point out to the members of the government, you among the number, the cruelty, irrationality, and injustice of the measures employed, and to ask you, to the best of your ability, to put a stop to them and to free yourself of the moral responsibility for them.

I shall be very thankful to you, if you shall answer me with a simple unofficial letter, telling me what you think of what I have expressed, and whether you will fulfil my prayer, which is, that in the future you will transfer all the persecutions, if they are indispensable, to me, from the government's standpoint the chief offender.

With the feeling of sincere good-will, I remain respectfully yours.

Moscow, April 20, 1896.

ON THE DECEPTION OF THE CHURCH

I HAVE received and continue to receive your numerous letters, dear ———, and I should like to answer in detail what to me is the most important part in them.

I think it superfluous to reply to your unjust assumptions that (1) I am angry at you, (2) that I think that our life ends here, (3) that I may and must be worried by the financial help to some (selected by you out of millions of just such people, who surround me), because all these replies have been made by me in advance in my writings with as great a circumstantiality as I am capable of. (I send you a collection of my writings.) In my prohibited writings, you know, you will find these answers.

I cannot be angry at you, because, above all, I love you, and so I should myself like to help you in your hard and dangerous situation. I am speaking of your desire to hypnotize yourself into the ecclesiastic faith. This is very dangerous, because with such hypnotization that which is most precious in man — his reason — is lost.

I shall begin from the beginning. I began this letter before receiving the letter about Isaák Sírin with the copy of the declaration to the governor, and this letter of yours and the declaration still more provoked in me the desire, and called out in me the consciousness of my duty to try to help you, and, I will say frankly, not you alone, but many people, who are in the same situation with you, or are about to enter into it. I am speaking of sincere, pure men, who adopt this or that conviction, not in order

to justify their situation, but only because they see the truth in it.

One day a very rich and distinguished lady of the court, speaking of faith, told me that she believed like "Mother Akulína," and she apparently thought that she had said something very clever and even profound: such a refined lady, and she condescends to believe like Mother Akulína. But she not only said something stupid, but even told an absolute untruth.

This lady is educated in all kinds of languages, has studied cosmography, history, knows of the existence of Voltaire, Renan, Brahminism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and so she cannot believe like Mother Akulína. Mother Akulína, in her belief in the Mother, the Queen of Heaven, and in Saint Nicholas, and in the Father, the King of Heaven, who lives in heaven, and so forth, believes in the highest that has been reached by her consciousness, and this belief not only does not present any contradiction with her comprehension of life, but even illuminates and elucidates for her the phenomena of the world. For the lady this is impossible. She knows that the world was not created six thousand years ago; that mankind has not been derived from Adam and Eve, but from the evolution of the animal; she knows that, besides the Christians of her denomination, there are five times as many people of other faiths than the Christian; she knows that Christianity has been corrupted and has brought forth hundreds and thousands of inimical sects, and has degenerated into the Inquisition and into savage fanaticism; she knows how the ecumenical councils, in which the dogmas were established, took place; she knows that the same happened in Buddhism with their King Asoka, and in other faiths; she knows that the religions are subject to the same law of evolution as organisms and states, — they are born, develop, reach the highest point, and then grow old and disappear, like the Egyptian and

the Persian religions; she knows that our so-called Holy Scripture did not come down from heaven, but was written by men, was purged and corrupted, and so cannot have any infallible authority; she knows that there is no firm heaven, and that, therefore, neither Enoch, nor Elijah, nor Christ had any place to go to, when they flew away from the earth, and that, if they flew upwards, they are flying still; she knows that all those miracles with which they try to prove the authenticity of the ecclesiastic faith are repeated in all the other faiths, — such as the birth from a virgin, and the signs at birth, and the prophecy and the wisdom in childhood, and the cures, and the resurrection, and everything else, — that all these inventions of miracles are repeated in all the faiths, just as are the miracles of the exploits of the heroes in the popular epos. The lady must know all that, because she has been taught all that, and she could have read all that in books, which are accessible to her, and all that is known to those gentlemen who frequent her drawing-room.

And so she not only has no right to believe like Mother Akulína, but even *cannot* believe like her. She can say that she believes so, but she cannot believe so. For her to believe, she needs a faith in which she could, like that woman, believe as in the highest reached by her cognition, and a faith which would not only not contradict her comprehension of the phenomena of the world, but would also illumine, elucidate, and unify all her knowledge.

This lady will not understand me, because she needs the faith of Mother Akulína, in order that she may be able to continue to live as she does, that is, impiously to swallow every day, for the gratification of her lusts and luxury, the labour of hundreds of working people, and, at the same time, to speak of God and Christ and of her religiousness. Only by adopting and professing the faith of Mother Akulína, in other words, the faith of men who lived two thousand years ago, can she lead such an im-

pious life with the self-contentment of religiousness. And so I can understand it in the case of the lady; but what do you, who are deported to the end of the world and who are going from one prison to another, and from place to place, because you want to introduce the Christian truths into life, what do you want with this terrible deception and with this insolvable contradiction between your beliefs and your knowledge and comprehension of the phenomena of the universe?

Just think what you profess and what situation you are in. I understand, it is very nice and agreeable to feel one in faith with those who surround us, when the bells toll the "hours" at Lent, and the communicants go and ask each other's forgiveness, and beautifully pray in beautiful churches, calling forth images of the ancient, peaceful, solemn life, — it would be very nice to be united with them and to live that life. But that is a self-deception, — it is only the playing of a part. But your situation is not this, that you now, at Lent, are in Pudózh, but that you are living in God's world, upon the planet Earth, which is inhabited by fifteen thousand millions of inhabitants of all kinds of races, who profess different religions, in this one hundred thousandth year or so after the appearance of the first men, — in one of the corners of the northern hemisphere, amidst a nation called Russian, and you live in this place and in this time by the will of God, the one by whose will not only this planet Earth exists with its inhabitants, but also this to me obviously infinite world. You know this position of yours, and in conformity with this position you ought to establish your relation to God, that is, to establish a relation which would be just as good for any man in your situation, — a relation which would be clear, comprehensible, and obligatory for every thinking person, a Japanese, a Malay, a Zulu.

And what relation to God are *you*, with your knowledge,

trying to establish? You say: "God revealed Himself and His truth five thousand years ago to one small Asiatic nation, and not completely at that: nineteen hundred years ago He revealed it in full, in that He sent His son, also God, to the same little nation. And the fact that the people then killed this son of God caused the sin of the first men and of all those who came after to be redeemed. But besides this redemption, God through this son of His established the church, which guards the whole truth and aids in the salvation of men by means of sacraments, — by smearing one with oil, giving one bread and wine to swallow, — and this church exists only in Pudózh or in Russia; but all men who have lived before this church and who live outside of it are not taken into consideration."

Tell this, and many other things about baptism, images, masses for the dead, and, above all, about a punishing and redeeming God, to some fresh, sensible man, who has never heard of it, — and he will stare at you or will run away from you, for fear that in your madness you will begin to strike him, or he will bind you as a dangerous lunatic.

Only because this poison was inoculated in us in our childhood, we bear it all, as though it were not noticeable. And what is most terrible, this frightful, slowly inoculated poison has made useless and inefficacious for us Christ's faith, which answers the highest demands of the men of our time.

We have lived nineteen hundred years since Christ; but His teaching in all its purity even now completely answers all our demands for the establishment of our relation to God, not to the God of the Jews and of the Orthodox, or Catholic, or Protestant Church, but to that God by whose will exists this infinite universe, and amidst it the planet Earth, and upon earth I, who live after hundreds of thousands of years of the evolution of animal

life in Pudózh, or in New York, or in the deserts of Africa.

The chief difference between the private, exclusive relation, which the churchmen, the Buddhists, the Brahmins, the Mohammedans, and others call their religion, and the true Christian faith is this, that all those religions, to say nothing of their incompatibility with knowledge and common sense, have the property of excluding, denying one another, whereas Christ's religion is such that it is not only comprehensible and accessible to everybody, but also cannot be rejected, cannot be disagreed with. This religion is not only not exclusive, but, on the contrary, coincides with everything true and exalted in all the other religions.

It says that the beginning of everything is spiritual, rational, and full of love. This beginning is called God and Father. It calls this beginning Father, because man recognizes this beginning in himself. Entering into life, it seems to man that he lives as an animal, that his animal being is his ego; but in proportion as his reason is developed, he sees that this animal is not free, that it suffers and perishes, and in his consciousness he feels that there is something which is not subject to oppression, nor to suffering, nor to perdition; and man enters into a contradiction with himself and into despair.

It is to this internal contradiction that, developing it, Christ's teaching gives an answer. It tells a man: it only seems to you that you live as an animal; but that only seems so to you, as it seems to you that the bank is running, when you travel in a boat, or as it seems to you that the sun is moving. What lives in man is only his spiritual, rational, and good beginning, — the son of God. Man must transfer his ego from the animal to the spiritual, and satisfy the demands, not of the animal, but of the spiritual being. Man need but understand this, and the contradiction of his life disappears: every oppression,

every suffering disappears, he becomes completely free. Death is destroyed, because what is spiritual, what is God Himself, cannot be destroyed: it always was, is, and will be.

In this transference of our ego from the animal to the spiritual lies the essence of Christ's teaching, and the details of this teaching, begun with Christ and continued by all humanity, consist in the destruction, the disclosure of those offences by means of which the men of the animal life, from the inertia of tradition, try to conceal from man his ruin in the animal life and to maintain him on this false path. The disclosure of these offences is the work of the life of men, — that which God wants of men.

Such, in its broadest features, is Christ's teaching, — that teaching by which the relation of man to the world is established. And this teaching is not exceptional, but general, the highest, most accessible to all, and not only does not contradict the other teachings and modern knowledge, but even illumines and elucidates them.

And here, in the place of it, we will return to the comprehension of life, with sacrifices, redemptions, sacraments, an evil, punishing and rewarding, personal God, — such as it was five thousand years ago. What for? God save us from that, dear friend.

What you do and what you may do appears to me like this: a man is travelling in a steam automobile. He does not know the road, or simply is tired of travelling fast, and he wants to arrest the motion, — so he sticks a rod between the wheels. He puts in one rod: the wheels catch it, but the machine still goes on, though more slowly. He lets down another rod, from the thinner end. There seems to be no trouble: the machine still works; but the wheels will soon catch the thicker end of the rod, and then the machine will be clogged and spoiled. We cannot with impunity admit anything irrational, anything

not justified by reason, into our faith. Reason is given us from above, to guide us. But if we choke it, this will not pass with impunity. And the ruin of reason is the most terrible ruin.

Here I have told you a part of what I think, — I told it lovingly to you. Please, do not answer me by points, discussing any one of them in particular. If you disagree, explain to me how you combine your faith with your comprehension of life, and briefly and clearly express to me your world-conception.

Meanwhile good-bye. I kiss you.

Moscow, March 16, 1896.

THREE PHASES OF LIFE

You give me three examples of your inconsistency: (1) malice toward men, (2) the lack of correspondence between life and the comprehension of life, and (3) the doubt in the future, the eternal life.

The first, — malice toward men, the impotence, not only of love, but also of forgiveness, — I have experienced more powerfully than anything else, and I suffer very much from it. I console myself with the thought that God aids me in this, and there are interruptions of malice, there are flashes of the consciousness of my guilt, my sins, and so — a cessation of condemnations, and even manifestations of pity, where there was malice. I am sure that God gives you, too, these minutes, these sparks of fire. And if there are sparks, there will be warmth and light.

I will tell you what that tinder is into which I catch these sparks, and with what I try to fan the fire in my heart.

Above all, repentance; not wholesale repentance: "I have sinned, father, I have sinned," or, still worse, the admission that I am wholly in sin, that I was born in sin, that every step of mine is sin. This admission, collecting, compacting all the sins in one heap, seems to separate them from me and deprives me of that inevitable spiritual use, which by the mercy of God is attached to every sin, as an antidote to a poison.

Repentance does not consist in repenting of the whole past life in general, but in seeing in our soul the traces

and remnants (it is well, if only traces and remnants) of former sins, definite, comprehensible, committed then and then, and in forming from these remnants a vivid picture of our former life, and the present viciousness and savagery, for every point in particular.

What ought we to do, in order that we may stop being angry at a man, in order to make peace, forgive, if there is anything to forgive, and even pity and love him? Best of all is to think of some sin of ours in his presence, a sin like his. That is particular happiness, and then there is an immediate cure. But that happens but rarely (but it only seems to be rare because we do not look for it well), and so we have to look for a similar, or at least equal, or, still better, worse sin, in the presence of others. And if we do so sincerely, seriously, and vividly think of our abomination, — we shall forgive, make peace, and, God willing, pity and love.

Of course, God forfend that we dissemble, pretending to love and pity, when we do not. That is worse than hatred. And similarly, God forfend that we should not catch and fan this spark of pity and love for our enemy, that divine love, when God sends us this spark. There can, indeed, be nothing more precious.

We have a terrible habit of forgetting, — of forgetting our evil, our sins. And there is no more radical means for forgetting our sins, than wholesale repentance. All the sins are boiled down, as it were, into one impermeable mass, with which nothing can be done, and if a nice little sin of our own is needed, such as would redeem the sin of those who sin against us, none is found. But this museum ought to be kept in order, so that we may find at once what is needed, when it is needed, and all the objects, the sins, ought to be kept separately, so that they should not cover one another, but may appear in the most impressive form. We must not forget, but remember, always remember our sins, in order by means of

them to mitigate the condemnation of others. I think that the chief difference between a good and a bad man is this, that the good man remembers all the evil which he has done, and forgets and does not see the good, and a bad man does the other way.

Thus, as to the first point, I can tell you what has been pointed out to me by God: do not forgive yourself, and then you will forgive others.

The second, the lack of correspondence between life and that which, you say, it ought to be, and which, we may say outright, it will be, is its symptom, that is, the sign of life: the acorn does not correspond to the oak, the egg to the hen, the repentant sinner to a saint. In all of them there takes place a motion from a lower condition to a higher, from the worse to the better, from the lesser to the greater, — all that is not precise, — there is taking place *life*.

Now in this life there is a threefold relation:

(1) Life goes on, and a being, like the acorn, a child, often even a man, does not feel, does not cognize this motion, and neither helps nor retards it.

(2) Man recognizes this motion, — he sees toward what it is moving, and he hastens this motion, hurries to be what he ought to become. The boy wants to be a grown-up: he imagines that if he puts on a uniform, goes out hunting, drinks, and swears, he will be a man. The same takes place in the religious life: a man sees that he is going toward the good, toward the liberation from sin, toward sanctity, and imagines that, if he sacrifices wethers and tapers, if he goes to confession and communion, or if he assures himself that such sacrifice has been made, he is purged of sin, that he will actually be freed from sin and will reach sanctity. That is a terrible path. As a boy is corrupted, if he wishes to be what he is not, so is a man who religiously wants to be something he is not.

(3) Man sees whither he is going, knows that the

disagreement between his life and his consciousness is a condition of his life, and with all his strength tries in his life to diminish this disagreement, knowing that this is not his own personal matter, but that of his Father, of Him who sent him hither such as he is, and implanted in him the consciousness of what he ought to be and will be. And man, knowing that this lack of correspondence is not something especial, something accidental, but the law of every life, without which no motion is possible, and no approximation to the eternal and infinite perfection, God, — knowing this, man sees in this lack of correspondence the condition of his life and good.

Indeed, if man did not have any comprehension, and the resulting consciousness of the disagreement between his life and what it ought to be, and if life were such as it was when he was a senseless sinner (it is not only you and I, but everybody, that passes through sin), it would be worse for him. And if there were not his sinfulness, and he could at once be what he wants to be according to his comprehension, it would be worse still: there would be no reason for living, no life at all.

But you will say: "Why do I not go ahead? Why am I still such as I was?" Thank God for feeling thus. It is bad when a man says to himself: "I am better than I was; here, for example, I do not smoke, do not fornicate, do not even grow angry, — I do not give my tithe as before, and I am not like the publican." God help us always to be dissatisfied and not to see those steps which we have made (if we have made them), upon approaching Him. These tiny steps are noticeable only when we do what we ought not to do, — when we compare ourselves with our former selves, or with others. We must try to be perfect, as the Father is perfect, and so to compare ourselves with Him, that is, the highest, infinite good and truth, and then we shall not see our steps. What will support us in life is not these Lilliputian steps on the

path of goodness, but only the consciousness of our doing the will of God. God's will is this, that, having done everything we can for the destruction of the disagreement, we may recognize that we have done what we cannot help doing, as in the case of the labourer and the husbandmen who return from the field. Another striking thing is this, that this lack of correspondence between consciousness and life, which so disturbs many, is always one and the same in the case of all men, — in the case of the holiest and of the most sinful of men. At least I know in my own case that in the sacred minutes of consciousness at every point of my path of life, the lack of correspondence and the dissatisfaction with myself have been one and the same, — constant. I did not feel it only when I sank morally. Consequently it is not something special, but the property of a true human life.

Yes, the devil cannot say to sensible people who sin, and know that they sin: "You are not sinning at all, when you sin, kill, fornicate, and so on. Continue to live in the same way. You and everybody else will fare well." The people will not believe him. So he invents a sophism which leads to the same, that is, that men, sinning, should believe that they are not sinning, and should bathe in their sins, without noticing them, — and so he says to them: "Let us assume that your life is such as will not lead all to the good and as may be called sinful. Let us assume that you sin, living as you do; but you cannot even live without sinning, and the consciousness of sinning is too oppressive, and God could not have meant that all should constantly be tormented by this consciousness, and so He has given a means for freeing oneself from this consciousness. This means is the sacrifices which you make, or which are made for you, — in general redemptory sacrifices."

We have so long been used to this, we have so imbibed with the milk this representation of a life in which we

can be at peace and satisfied with ourselves, that that natural, inevitable condition of the living human soul in which we feel that we strive from what is worse to what is better, that is, the lack of correspondence between life and consciousness, presents itself to us as something exceptional.

I frequently think of the hero of a story which I should like to write: a man educated, let us say, in a circle of revolutionists, himself at first a revolutionist, then a populist, socialist, Orthodox, a monk on Mount Athos, then an atheist, a man of a family, then a Dukhobor. He begins everything, throws away everything, without ending anything. People laugh at him. He has done nothing, and dies ingloriously somewhere in a prison. Dying, he thinks that he has wasted his life for nothing, but it is he who is a saint.

The third is the suspicion that everything which you think and feel about eternal life may be the fruit of unconscious self-deception, which results from fear before the apparition of life. You write that you cannot clearly express this condition. Indeed, it cannot be expressed. This condition is only a sign of something unfinished in the soul.

If there is nothing, we should live and enjoy ourselves. But you can no longer do so. If all this is a bad deception, an apparition, we ought to shoot ourselves or be silent. But you cannot do that, either. But if there is a God, we must throw off, cut down everything which separates us from Him. And that you are doing and will do.

Again the terrible trick of the devil — the frivolous, ungrounded, false faith in the *future,* and not in the *eternal* life. I think that if there were no false teaching about the future life, no one would have any doubt as to the eternal life (the one about which your child, who undoubtedly lived it, told you so clearly). Again the devil cannot in any way say that there is no eternal life, when

there is but the one eternal life, and we cannot know any other (the dead child lives it). Again he invents a trick: the carnal life is a crossing of a river, an abyss, between this shore and the next, an unquestionably firm ford, which is right on our path, and it is impossible to miss it, or to doubt in its firmness or that it leads to the good. And so the devil builds a bridge, which ends in a pit, which does not at all lead whither it ought to lead, and the devil takes people there under the pretext that it is easier to cross on his bridge. And standing on his bridge and seeing the abyss before oneself, one believes that there is no life.

I have experienced it. Do not believe him. If there is any doubt, it is only so because you have not lost your belief in the future life of personalities. That is his, the devil's, deception.

Eternal life is like a balloon. The gas is not our force, but God's, which draws us upwards; the cables which hold it down are the delusions; and the ballast is the bias, our will, and not God's. If the cable is cut, the ballast holds us. In proportion as we throw out the ballast, we fly upwards.

Before 1899.

THE COMMUNE AND THE WORLD

(From a letter to D. A. Khílkov)

The other day I received your letter, D. A., and I have just finished reading it again. I will try to answer its chief contents, as I understand them. What of it, if the communes have fallen to pieces? If we considered these communes to be a sample of how Christ's teaching ought to be realized in the world and of how the kingdom of God should be established upon earth, that would be terrible: then the falling to pieces of the commune would show the inadequacy of Christ's teaching; but thus the communes were not looked upon, either by us who were outside them, or by those who took part in them. (If any one looked upon them in this light, their falling to pieces would correct this false view, and so the falling to pieces is in this sense even useful.) These communes were a certain form of life which some people chose in their motion along the path indicated by Christ. Other people chose other forms (or other people were placed under different conditions), like you, I, Ge, and all men who travel on this path. And, as you yourself write, no matter how good separate settlements may be, they are good only so long as they are needed, — all forms, as forms, are of necessity certainly transient, like waves. If the communes have fallen to pieces, that was so only because the men who lived in them outgrew their integument and tore it. We can only rejoice at this. I now am writing partly about this, and in a letter I shall of course not be able to express everything clearly, but I will try, and

you help me, — understand even what is not clearly expressed.

Christianity is a motion along a path indicated by Christ, — by means of the truth toward the full perfection of the heavenly Father. And Christianity is the more Christianity, the more it is motion, the more accelerated this motion is. Thus the chief of the publicans, Zacchæus, who lived all in lust and suddenly decided to give, was at that moment more of a Christian than the disciples who asked what their rewards would be for their loyalty; the thief on the cross, the harlot, the publican, are more than the Pharisee. Every man, no matter on what low stage he may stand, may be a Christian, may move and accelerate this motion to infinity (observe that nothing touches us so much or gives us so much pleasure as these motions, when the sinner repents, — the lost sheep, the coin), and, no matter on what high stage of righteousness a man may be, he can stop moving, stop being a Christian. Nothing arrests the motion so much as a certain form, as self-observation, as the consciousness of being at a certain stage (indeed, this consciousness is the form where "the left hand does not know what the right is doing," and, "not fit for the kingdom of God is he that takes hold of the plough and looks back").

Precisely this the churches have done. What is the church? Read the Orthodox, the Catholic, and the Lutheran catechisms. They deny one another, and each of them asserts that it has the truth. Thus a strict, precise definition of the church is — men who assert of themselves that the comprehension of the truth and the fulfilment of it, as practised by them, are the only correct ones. But this is said by every man who recognizes the form chosen by him as the only regular one. This tendency of men of recognizing the form as regular, though not approaching the cruelty of the church, is the chief impediment to Christianity, — it is friction. It is the

problem of men who follow Christ to diminish this friction as much as possible. There are an endless number of forms for following in the path of Christ, just as there are an endless number of points in the line, and not one is more important than another. What is important is the rapidity of motion, and the rapidity of motion is in inverse proportion to the possibility of determining the points.

Again: you say that you do not like the word and conception of "self-perfection," and that you do not like perfection itself: it is too indeterminate and broad. I understand this. This is connected with the questions about the communes and forms, and this is what I have been thinking of it (the parable of the labourers in the vineyard who do not pay tribute and of the talents): The true life is given to man under two conditions: (1) that he may do good to men (but the good is one, and one only, — to increase love toward men, — to feed a hungry man, visit a sick man, and so forth, — all this is only for the purpose of increasing love in men), and (2) that he should increase the power of love which is given to *him*. One conditions the other: good works, which increase love in men, are good only when in their performance I feel that love is being increased in me, when I do them lovingly, with emotion; and love is increased in me (I am being perfected), only when I do good works and evoke love in other men. Thus, if I do good works and remain cold, or, if I perfect myself and think that I am increasing love in myself, while this does not evoke love in other men (at times even provokes evil), that is *not it*. Only then do I know — and we all know — that it is *it*, when I love more and people, too, are filled with more love (by the way, this is also a proof that love is the one essence — one God in all of us — which, by discovering Him in ourselves discovers Him in everybody else, and vice versa).

Thus I think that every arrangement, every definition, every arrest of consciousness at any stage is the predominance of care about increasing love in oneself, a self-perfection without good works. The grossest form of this kind is the standing on a pillar, but every form is more or less such a standing. Every form separates us from men, consequently also from the possibility of good works and from the incitement of love in them. Such also are the communes, and this is their defect, if we recognize them as a constant form. The standing on a pillar and the going away into the wilderness and the living in a commune may be necessary to men for a time, but as a constant form they are an obvious sin and madness. It is impossible to live a pure, saintly life on a pillar or in a commune, because man is deprived of one-half of life, that of a communion with the world, without which his life has no meaning. To live thus constantly, it is necessary for us to deceive ourselves, because it is too clear that, as it is impossible in a turbid stream by any chemical process to separate a circle of pure water, so it is impossible amidst the whole world living by violence for the sake of lust to live alone or alone to be a saint. It is necessary to buy or rent land or a cow, and it is necessary to enter into relations with the external, non-Christian world. These relations are most important and necessary. It is impossible and unnecessary to go away from them. It is possible only to deceive oneself. The whole business of a disciple of Christ is to establish the most Christian relations with this world.

Imagine that all men who understand the teaching of truth as we do should assemble and settle on an island. Would that be life? And consider that the whole world, all men, are involuntarily going in the same direction with us, and that the men who understand the truth as we do, who are standing (now) on the same step, are scattered all over the world, and that we have the joy of meeting

them and knowing them and their labours. Is not that better? Indeed it is.

You say that it is impossible to love Herod. I do not know. But I know, and so do you, that we must love him; I know, and so do you, that if I do not love him, I am pained, I have no life (1 John iii. 14), and so we must try and we can work.

I imagine a man who has lived all his life in love amidst those who love him, but who does not love Herod, and another, who has used all his efforts for loving Herod and has remained indifferent to those who loved him and for twenty years did not love him, but in the twenty-first year came to love Herod and made Herod love him and other men, and I do not know who is better. "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?"

1899 (?).

CONCERNING THE CONGRESS OF PEACE

(Letter to certain Swedes)

GENTLEMEN: — The idea expressed in your beautiful letter, that universal disarmament may be attained in the easiest and most certain way by means of the refusal of separate individuals to take part in military service, is quite correct. I even think that it is the only way of freeing men from the ever growing terrible calamities of militarism. But your idea that the question about substituting public works for military service, in the case of those persons who refuse to do it, may be considered at the Conference about to be held at the request of the emperor, seems to me quite faulty, if for no other reason than that the Conference can be nothing else but one of those hypocritical institutions, whose purpose is not the attainment of peace, but, on the contrary, the concealment from men of that one means for attaining universal peace which advanced people are beginning to see.

The Conference, they say, will have for its aim, if not the abolition of armaments, at least the cessation of the increase of them. It is assumed that at this Conference the representatives of the governments will agree not to increase their armaments. If that is so, there involuntarily arises the question as to how the governments of those states will act, which during the meeting of the Conference happen to be weaker than their neighbours. It is not very likely that such governments will agree to remain even in the future in the same weaker condition than that of their neighbours. But if they should agree to remain

in this weaker condition, through their firm faith in the decrees of the Conference, they could be weaker still and not spend anything on the army.

But if the business of the Conference shall consist in equalizing the military powers of the states and in keeping them equal, and it should be possible to attain such an impossible equalization, there involuntarily arises the question: why need the governments stop at their present armaments, and why do they not descend to lower ones? Why is it necessary for Germany, France, or Russia to have, let us say, one million soldiers, and not five hundred thousand, or ten thousand, or one thousand? If it is possible to diminish, why not reduce it to the minimum, and finally in place of the armies put up champions, David and Goliath, and decide international affairs according to the result of the fight of the champions?

They say that the conflicts of the governments will be decided by a court of arbitration. But, to say nothing of the fact that the affairs will not be decided by the representatives of the nations, but by the representatives of the governments, when there would be no guarantee that the solutions would be correct, — who will execute the sentence of the court? — The armies. — Whose armies? — Those of all the powers. — But the forces of these powers are not equal. Who, for example, will on the Continent enforce the decision which, let us say, will be disadvantageous for Germany, Russia, or France, which are united in an alliance? Or who will on the sea enforce a decision which is opposed to the interests of England, America, or France? The decision of the court of arbitration against the military violence of the states will be executed by means of military violence; that is, that which is to be limited will itself be a means of limitation. To catch a bird, it is necessary to throw salt upon its tail.

I remember, during the siege of Sevastopol, I was one

day sitting with the adjutants of Sáken, the commander of the garrison, when into the waiting-room came S. S. Urúsov, a very brave officer, a very odd fellow, and at the same time one of the best European chess-players of the time. He said that he had some business with the general. An adjutant took him to the general's cabinet. Ten minutes later Urúsov passed by us with a dissatisfied face. The adjutant who saw him out returned to us and told us on what business Urúsov had come to see Sáken. He came to Sáken to ask him to challenge the English to play a game of chess in the front trench, at the van of the Fifth Bastion, which had several times passed from hand to hand and had cost several hundreds of lives.

There is no doubt but that it would have been much better to play chess in the trench than to kill people. But Sáken did not consent to Urúsov's proposition, as he knew quite well that it would be possible to play chess in the trench only if there existed a mutual confidence in the parties that the condition would be carried out. But the presence of armies standing in front of the trench, and of the cannon directed upon it, proved that no such confidence existed. So long as there were armies on either side, it was evident that the matter would be decided with bayonets, and not with a game of chess. The same is true of international questions. For them to be decided by a court of arbitration, it is necessary for the powers to have absolute confidence that they will mutually carry out the decision of the court. If the confidence exists, there is no need whatsoever of the armies. But if there are armies, it is clear that this confidence is lacking, and the international questions cannot be decided in any other way than by force of arms. So long as there are any armies, they are needed, not only for the purpose of making new acquisitions, as now all the states are doing, — some in Asia, some in Africa, and some in Europe, — but also for the purpose of retaining by force what has

been acquired by force. Only by conquering is it possible to acquire and retain by force. What always conquers is the *gros battaillons.* And so, if a government has an army, it has to have as much as possible of it. In this does its duty consist. If a government does not do so, it is unnecessary. A government may do a great deal in its internal affairs, — it may set free, enlighten, enrich its people, it may construct roads and canals, colonize deserts, arrange public works, but there is one thing it cannot do, namely that for which the Conference is called, that is, it cannot reduce its military strength.

But if the aim of the Conference, as is to be seen from the late explanations, shall consist in eliminating from use such instruments of destruction as present themselves to people as specially cruel (why not try, among the number and above all else, to eliminate at the same time the seizure of letters, the forgery of telegrams, and espionage, and all those horrible rascalities which form a necessary condition of military defence?), such a prohibition of using in the struggle such means as are at hand is fully as possible as the injunction given to people who are fighting for their lives, during the fight not to touch the most sensitive parts of their adversaries. And why are a wound and death from an explosive bullet any worse than a wound caused by the simplest kind of a bullet or a splinter in a very sensitive spot, the sufferings from which reach the utmost limit, and from which death ensues as from any other weapon?

It is incomprehensible how mentally sound adults can seriously express such strange ideas.

Let us assume that the diplomatists, who devote all their lives to lying, are so used to this vice and constantly live and act in such a dense atmosphere of lying that they themselves do not notice all the senselessness and mendacity of their propositions; but how can private individuals, honest individuals, — not those who, in order to

fawn before the emperor, laud his ridiculous proposition, — help seeing that nothing can be the result of this Conference but the confirmation of the deception in which the governments keep their subjects, as was the case with Alexander I.'s Holy Alliance?

The Conference will have for its purpose, not the establishment of peace, but the concealment from men of the only means of freeing them from the calamities of war, which consists in the refusals of separate individuals to take part in military murder, and so the Conference can in no way take this question under advisement.

All those who from conviction refuse to do military service will always be treated by every government as the Dukhobors have been treated by the Russian government. At the same time that it proclaimed to the whole world its quasi-peaceable intentions, it secretly from all tormented, ruined, and expelled the most peaceable people of Russia, only because they were not peaceable in words, but in deeds, and so refused to do military service. Just so, though less harshly, have acted all the European governments in cases of refusal to do military service. Thus have acted the Austrian, Prussian, French, Swedish, Swiss, Dutch governments, nor can they act differently.

They cannot act differently, because, ruling their subjects by a force which is formed by a disciplined army, they can nowise leave the diminution of this force, and consequently of their power, to the accidental moods of private individuals, the more so that, in all likelihood, as soon as work could by all men be substituted for military service, the vast majority of people (nobody likes to kill and to be killed) would prefer work to military service, and very soon there would be such a great mass of labourers and such a small number of soldiers, that there would not be any one to compel the labourers to work.

The liberals, socialists, and other so-called representative people, who are enmeshed in their own wordiness,

may imagine that their speeches in the Chambers and meetings, their unions, strikes, and pamphlets are very important phenomena, and that the refusals of separate individuals to do military service are unimportant phenomena, which it is not worth while to consider; but the governments know very well what for them is important, and what not, and the governments gladly allow all kinds of liberal and radical speeches in the Reichstags and labour-unions, and socialistic demonstrations, and even themselves make believe that they sympathize with all that, knowing that these phenomena are very useful for them, in that they divert the attention of the masses from the chief and only means of liberation; but they will never openly permit any refusals to do military service or refusals to pay taxes for military service (that is one and the same thing), because they know that such refusals, in laying open the deception of the governments, undermine their power at the root.

So long as the governments will rule their nations by force and will wish, as they now do, to acquire new possessions (the Philippines, Port Arthur, and so forth) and to retain those that have been acquired (Poland, Alsace, India, Algiers, and so forth), they will not only never reduce the armies, but will, on the contrary, constantly increase them.

The other day the news was announced that an American regiment had refused to go to Iloilo. This news is given out as something surprising. But the surprise is, why such phenomena are not constantly repeated: how could all those Russian, German, French, Italian, American people, who have fought of late, at the will of strangers whom for the most part they do not respect, have gone to kill people of another nation, and to subject themselves to sufferings and death?

It would seem to be so clear and so natural for all these men to come to their senses, if not at the time when

they were being enlisted, at least at the last moment, when they are being led against the enemy, — to stop, throw down their guns, and call out to their adversaries to do the same.

This would seem to be so simple, so natural, that all people ought to act like that. But if people do not act thus, this is due to the fact that the people believe their governments, which assure them that all those burdens which men carry for the sake of war are imposed upon them for their own good. All the governments have with striking impudence always asserted that all those military preparations, and even the wars themselves which they wage, are needed for the sake of peace. Now they are making in this field of hypocrisy and deception a new step, which consists in this, that those very governments, for the existence of which armies and wars are necessary, make it appear that they are busy finding measures for the reduction of the armies and the abolition of wars. The governments want to assure the nations that the separate individuals have no cause for troubling themselves about their liberation from war: the governments themselves will so fix it in their conferences that the armies will at first be reduced and later finally abolished. But that is an untruth.

The armies can be reduced and abolished only against the will, and not with the will, of the governments. The armies will be reduced and abolished only when public opinion will brand the people who from fear or advantage sell their liberty and take up a position in the ranks of murderers, called the army; and will recognize the people, — now unknown and condemned, — who, in spite of all persecutions and sufferings borne by them, refuse to give their liberty into the hands of other men and again to become instruments of murder, to be what they are, — champions and benefactors of humanity.

Only then will the armies at first be reduced and then

entirely be abolished, and a new era will begin in the life of humanity.

This time is at hand.

And so I think that your idea that the refusals to do military service are phenomena of immense importance, and that they will free humanity from the calamities of militarism is quite correct; but that your idea that the Conference will contribute anything toward it is quite faulty. The Conference can only divert the people's attention from the one means of salvation and liberation.

Moscow, January, 1899.

LETTER TO A. V. VLÁSOV[1]

Respected Brother, Andréy Vasílevich: — I have received your letter and was glad to learn of you and your faith. Your having suffered from the worldly authorities proves that you are travelling on Christ's road. Every man who walks on that road cannot avoid falling in with the prince of this world. A light is not put under a bushel, but so that it may be seen by others. But the prince of the world cannot admit this, because Christ's light reveals his evil deeds. Only those serve God's work who, establishing His kingdom upon earth, arraign the deceptions of the prince of the world and suffer persecution for it. May God help you for it.

I fully agree with you as to what you say in your letter, and rejoiced in spirit, reading it. I should like to give you one piece of advice, and that is, in your arraignment do not lose your love for your brother; and also this, in the arraignment of the lie put more stress and reliance on reason and love than on verses from the Scripture. The Scripture is the work of human hands, — in it there may be errors, and everybody may interpret it, especially Revelation, as he pleases; but reason is given directly by God and to all, — Tartars, Chinamen, and all other nations have one and the same, — and it is impossible not to believe in reason. Only those who do not wish to know the truth do not believe in it. I enclose

[1] Vlásov's personality and the contents of his letter to Tolstóy are faithfully rendered in Part III., Chapters XXI. and XXVII. of the *Resurrection*.

a few articles on faith, as I understand it: two of them, *Christ's Commandments* and *How to Read the Gospel*, were composed by me; the others are not mine, but I agree with them. Your loving brother.

1889.

LETTER TO A CORPORAL

You wonder how it is soldiers are taught that it is right to kill men in certain cases and in war, whereas in the Scripture, which is acknowledged to be sacred by those who teach this, there is nothing resembling such a permission, but there is the very opposite, — a prohibition to commit murder and even any insult against men, a prohibition to do to others what one does not wish to have done to oneself; you ask me whether this is not a deception, and if so, for whose advantage it is practised.

Yes, it is a deception, which is practised in favour of those who are accustomed to live by the sweat and blood of other people, and who for this purpose have been distorting Christ's teaching, which was given men for their good, but which now, in its distorted form, has become the chief source of all the calamities of men.

This happened in the following way:

The government and all those men of the upper classes who adhere to the government and live by the labours of others have to have means for controlling the labouring masses; the army is such a means. The defence against foreign enemies is only an excuse. The German government frightens its nation with the Russians and the French; the French frightens its nation with the Germans; the Russian frightens its nation with the Germans and the French, and so it is with all the nations; but neither the Germans, nor the Russians, nor the French wish to fight with their neighbours and with other nations; they prefer to live in peace with them and are afraid of war more than of anything in the world. But,

to have an excuse in their control of the labouring masses, the governments and the upper idle classes act like a gipsy, who whips his horse around the corner and then pretends that he is not able to hold it back. They stir up their people and another government, and then pretend that for the good or for the defence of their nation they cannot help but declare war, which again is profitable for the generals, officers, officials, merchants, and, in general, for the wealthy classes. In reality, war is only an inevitable consequence of the existence of the armies; but the armies are needed by the governments merely for the purpose of controlling their own labouring masses.

It is a criminal business, but the worst thing about it is this, that the governments, to have a rational foundation for their control of the masses, are obliged to pretend that they are professing the highest religious teaching known to men, that is, the Christian, and in this teaching educate their subjects. This teaching is in its essence opposed, not only to every murder, but even to every violence, and so, to be able to control the masses and be considered Christian, the governments had to distort Christianity and to conceal its true meaning from the masses and thus to deprive men of the good which Christ brought to them.

This distortion of Christianity took place long ago, in the time of the malefactor, Emperor Constantine, who for this was canonized a saint. All the subsequent governments, especially our own Russian government, have tried with all their strength to maintain this distortion and not to allow the masses to see the true meaning of Christianity, because, if they saw it, they would come to understand that the governments, with their taxes, soldiers, prisons, gallows, and cheating priests, are not only no pillars of Christianity, such as they pretend to be, but its greatest enemies.

In consequence of this distortion there result those

deceptions which startled you so much, and all those terrible calamities from which the masses suffer.

The masses are crushed, robbed, impoverished, ignorant, — they are dying out. Why? Because the land is in the hands of the rich; because the masses are enslaved in factories, in plants, in their daily occupations; because they are fleeced for the taxes, and the price for their labour is lowered, and the price for what they need is raised. How can they be freed? Shall the land again be taken away from the rich? But if that is done, the soldiers will come, will kill off the rioters, and will lock them up in prisons. Shall the factories, the plants, be taken away? The same will happen. Stick out in a strike? But that will never happen, — the rich can stick out longer than the labourers, and the armies will always be on the side of the capitalists. The masses will never get away from that want in which they are held, so long as the armies shall be in the power of the ruling classes.

But who are the armies, which hold the masses in this slavery? Who are those soldiers who will shoot at the peasants who have taken possession of the land, and at the strikers, if they do not disperse, and at the smugglers, who import wares without paying the revenue, — who will put into prisons and keep there those who refuse to pay the taxes? These soldiers are the same peasants whose land has been taken away, the same strikers, who want to raise their wages, the same payers of the taxes, who want to be freed from these payments.

Why do these men shoot at their brothers? Because it has been impressed upon them that the oath which they are compelled to take upon entering military service is obligatory for them, and that they may not kill men in general, but may kill them by command of the authorities, that is, the same deception which startled so much is practised upon them. But here arises the question, — how can people of sound mind, who frequently know

the rudiments and are even educated, believe in such a palpable lie? No matter how little educated a man may be, he none the less cannot help knowing that Christ did not permit any murder, but taught meekness, humility, forgiveness of offences, love of enemies; he cannot help but see that on the basis of the Christian teaching he cannot make a promise in advance that he will kill all those whom he is commanded to kill.

The question is, how can people of sound mind believe, as all those who are now doing military service have believed, in such an obvious deception? The answer to the question is this, that people are not deceived by this one deception alone, but have been prepared for it from childhood by a whole series of deceptions, a whole system of deceptions, which is called the Orthodox Church, and which is nothing but the coarsest kind of idolatry. According to this faith men are taught that God is triune, that besides this triune God there is also a heavenly queen, and that in addition to this queen there are also all kinds of saints, whose bodies have not decayed, and that in addition to the saints there are also the images of the Gods and of the queen of heaven, before which tapers have to be placed and prayers made with the hands, and that the most important and holy thing on earth is the pap which the priest makes on Sundays back of the partition out of wine and bread, that after the priest has whispered something over this, the wine will not be wine and the bread will not be bread, but the blood and body of one of the triune Gods, and so forth. All that is so stupid and senseless that it is absolutely impossible to understand what it all means, and, indeed, those who teach this faith command us not to understand, but to believe it; and the people, who have been trained from childhood to believe this, believe any senseless thing that they may be told. But after men are so stultified that they believe that God is hanging in the corner or is sitting in the piece of pap

which the priest is giving them in a spoon, that it is useful for this life and for the life to come to kiss a board or the relics and to place tapers before them, they are called upon to do military service, and there they are deceived any way they are to be deceived, by being compelled first of all to swear on the Gospel (which prohibits swearing) that they will do what is prohibited in this Gospel, and then, by teaching them that it is not a sin to kill men by the command of the authorities, but that it is a sin not to obey the authorities, and so forth.

Thus the deception of the soldiers, which consists in this, that they are impressed with the idea that it is possible without sinning to kill men by command of the authorities, does not stand alone, but is connected with a whole system of deceptions, without which this particular deception would be ineffective.

Only a man who is completely stupefied by that false faith, called Orthodox, which is given out to him as being Christian, is able to believe that it is no sin for a Christian to enter the army, promising blindly to obey any man who will consider himself higher in rank, and, at the command of another man, to learn to kill and to commit this most terrible crime, which is prohibited by all the laws.

A man who is free from the deception of the so-called Orthodox, pseudo-Christian faith will never believe this.

For this reason the so-called sectarians, that is, the Christians who reject the doctrine of Orthodoxy and acknowledge Christ's teaching, as it is expounded in the Gospels, and especially in the Sermon on the Mount, never fall a prey to this deception, and have always refused to do military service, recognizing it as incompatible with Christianity and preferring to suffer all kinds of tortures, as is now done by hundreds and thousands of men, — in Russia by the Dukhobors and Milkers; in Austria by the Nazarenes; in Sweden, Switzerland, and

Germany by the Evangelists. The government knows this and so follows nothing with such terror and attention as that the general ecclesiastic deception, without which its power is not possible, shall be practised from earliest childhood on all the children and shall be constantly maintained in such a way that not one man can escape it. The government permits anything, drunkenness and debauchery (it not only permits, but even encourages drunkenness and debauchery, — it helps in the stultification), but it is violently opposed to allowing men to free themselves from the deception and free others from it.

The Russian government practises this deception with particular cruelty and harshness. It commands all its subjects, threatening them with punishment in case of non-compliance, to have all their children baptized, while they are babes, into the deceptive, so-called Orthodox faith. When the children are baptized, that is, are considered Orthodox, they are, under threat of criminal prosecution, prohibited from discussing the faith into which they were baptized without their will, and for such a discussion of the faith, as well as for departing from it and passing over to another faith, they are subject to punishments.

So it cannot be said of all the Russians that they believe in the Orthodox faith, — they do not know whether they believe or not, because they were turned into that faith when they were still babes, and because they hold to this enforced faith through fear of punishment. All the Russians are caught into Orthodoxy through fell deception and are kept in it through cruel violence.

By making use of the power which it has, the government produces and maintains the deception, and the deception maintains its power.

And so the only means for freeing men from all the calamities consists in freeing them from that false faith

which is inculcated upon them by the government, and in impressing upon them the true Christian teaching, which is concealed from them by this false doctrine. The true Christian teaching is very simple, clear, and accessible, as Christ Himself has said. But it is simple and accessible only when a man is free from that lie in which we are all brought up, and which is given out to us as divine.

It is impossible to fill a vessel with what is important, if it is already filled with what is useless. It is necessary first to pour out what is useless. Even so it is with the acquisition of the true Christian teaching. We must first understand that all the stories about how God created the world six thousand years ago, and how Adam sinned, and how the human race fell, and how the son of God and God Himself, born of a virgin, came into the world and redeemed it, and all the fables of the Bible and of the Gospel, and all the lives of the saints, and the stories of miracles and relics, are nothing but a coarse mixing up of the superstitions of the Jewish nation with the deceptions of the clergy. Only for a man who is completely free from these deceptions can the simple and clear teaching of Christ, which demands no interpretations and is self-comprehensible, be accessible and comprehensible.

This teaching says nothing about the beginning or the end of the world, nor of God and His intentions, in general nothing about what we cannot know and need not know, but speaks only of what a man has to do in order to be saved, that is, in order in the best manner possible to pass the life into which he has come in this world, from his birth to his death. For this purpose we need only treat others as we wish to be treated. In this alone does the law and the prophets consist, as Christ has said. To do so, we need no images, no relics, no divine services, no priests, no sacred histories, no catechisms, no governments, but, on the contrary, a liberation from all that, — because only the man who is free from those fables

which the priests give out to him as the only truth, and who is not bound to other people by promises to act as they want him to act, can treat others as he wishes to be treated by them. Only in that case will a man be able to do, not his own will, nor that of others, but the will of God.

But the will of God consists, not in fighting and oppressing others, but in recognizing all men as brothers and serving one another.

Such are the thoughts that your letter evoked in me. I shall be very glad if they shall contribute to the elucidation of the questions in which you are interested.

1899.

WHO IS TO BLAME?

(On the Transvaal War)

. . . It gives me pleasure to answer you, because your pamphlets are written very well and very sincerely, with the exception of the third, in regard to which I agree with your relatives. That pamphlet is weak, not because it is too blunt, but because it does not bring out with sufficient clearness the repellent features of one of the most disgusting, if not comical, representatives of emperorship, — William II.

But no matter how well your articles are written, I do not agree with their subject matter; I do not exactly disagree, but I cannot condemn that which you condemn.

If two men having got drunk in an inn come to blows while playing cards, I will not make up my mind to condemn one of them, no matter how convincing the proofs of the other may be. The cause of the bad acts of one or the other does not by any means lie in the justice of one of them, but in this, that, instead of working or resting calmly together, they found it necessary to drink wine and play cards in the inn. Similarly, when I am told that in any kind of a war which has broken out it is exclusively one party that is to blame, I can never agree to this. We may admit that one side has acted worse, but the discussion as to which side acts worse does in no way explain the underlying cause of why such a terrible, cruel, and inhuman phenomenon as war is taking place. The causes are quite obvious to any man who does not shut his eyes, as in the present Transvaal War so also in

all the late wars. There are three such causes: (1) the unequal distribution of property, that is, the robbing of one class of people by another, (2) the existence of a military class, that is, of people educated and destined for murder, and (3) the false, for the most part consciously deceptive, religious teaching, in which the young generations are forcibly educated.

And so I think that it is not only useless, but even harmful to look for the cause of wars in a Chamberlain, a William, and so forth, thus concealing from ourselves the true causes, which are much nearer, and in which we ourselves take part. We can only be indignant with a Chamberlain or a William, and scold them; but our anger and scolding will only make bad blood for us, without changing the course of events: a Chamberlain and a William are blind tools of forces which lie far behind them. They act as they must act, and cannot act otherwise. The whole of history is a series of just such acts of all the political persons as the Transvaal War, and so it is quite useless and even impossible to be angry at them and condemn them, when we see the true causes of their activity and when we feel that we are ourselves to blame for this or that activity of theirs, according to how we look upon the three fundamental causes which I have mentioned.

So long as we are going to enjoy exclusive wealth, while the masses of the nation are crushed by labour, there will always be wars for markets, for gold fields, and so forth, which we need in order to maintain our exclusive wealth. So much the more inevitable will be the wars, so long as we are going to take part in the military class and will permit its existence, — if we will not struggle with all our strength against it. We either ourselves serve in the military caste, or recognize it not only as indispensable, but also as praiseworthy, and then, when war breaks out, we accuse some Chamberlain of it,

and so forth. Above all else, there will be war, so long as we are going to preach, and even without indignation and provocation to permit, that corruption of Christianity, which is called the ecclesiastic Christianity, and under which is possible a Christ-loving army, the blessing of cannon, and the recognition of war as Christian and just. We teach our children this religion and ourselves profess it, and then say either that Chamberlain or Krüger is to blame, because people are killing one another.

For that reason I do not agree with you and cannot rebuke the blind tools of ignorance and evil, but see the cause in manifestations in which I myself can contribute to the diminution or increase of evil. To contribute to the fraternal equalization of property, to make the least use of the privileges which have fallen to my share; in no way to take part in military affairs, to destroy that hypnosis by means of which people, turning into hired murderers, think that they are doing a good thing, if they serve in the army; and chiefly, to profess the rational Christian teaching, trying one's best to destroy that cruel deception of the false Christianity in which the young generations are forcibly brought up, — in this threefold work, it seems to me, lies the duty of every man who wishes to serve the good and who is justly provoked at that terrible war, which provoked you, too.

Moscow, December 4, 1899.

ON SUICIDE

The question as to whether a man has the right to kill himself is incorrectly put. There can be no question as to right. If he can, he has the right. I think that the possibility of killing oneself is a safety-valve. With this possibility a man has no right (here the expression "to have right" is in place) to say that life is intolerable to him. It is impossible for me to live, so I will kill myself, and then there will be no one to complain of the intolerableness of life. Man is given the opportunity to kill himself, and so he can (has the right to) kill himself, and he continually makes use of it, killing himself in duels, in war, by means of dissipation, whiskey, tobacco, opium, and so forth. The question can be only as to whether it is rational and moral (the rational and the moral always coincide) to kill oneself.

No, it is not rational; it is just as irrational as to cut off the suckers of a plant which you want to kill: the plant will not perish, but will only grow irregularly.

Life is not destructible, — it is outside time and space, and so death can only change the form, cut off its manifestation in this life. And having cut it off in this world, I, in the first place, do not know whether its manifestation in another world will be more agreeable to me, and, in the second place, I deprive myself of the possibility of learning and acquiring for my ego everything which it could acquire in this world. Besides, and above all else, it is irrational, because, interrupting my life, — because it seems disagreeable to me, — I only show that I have a

perverse conception of the destiny of this life, by assuming that its destiny is my enjoyment, whereas its destiny is, on the one hand, personal perfection, on the other, a ministration to that work which is accomplished by the whole life of the world. For the same reason suicide is immoral: life is given to man in its entirety, and he is given the possibility of living to a natural death, only on condition of his ministration to the life of the world, and he, making use of life only to the extent to which it is agreeable to him, refuses to serve the world with it, the moment it becomes disagreeable to him, whereas, in all probability, this ministration began at the very moment when life became unpleasant. Every work at first appears unpleasant.

In Óptin Cloister a paralyzed monk, who had the use of only his left arm, lay for more than thirty years on the floor. The doctors said that he must suffer very much, but he not only did not complain of his condition, but constantly making the sign of the cross, looking at the images, and smiling, expressed his gratefulness to God and joy at that spark of life which was glowing within him. Tens of thousands of visitors saw him, and it is hard to imagine all the good which spread over the world from this man, who was deprived of every possibility of work. No doubt this man did more good than thousands and thousands of healthy people, who imagine that they are serving the world in various institutions.

So long as there is life in man, he can perfect himself and serve the world. But he can serve the world only by perfecting himself, and he can perfect himself only by serving the world.

1900 (?).

A MESSAGE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

(From a letter to Mr. Edward Garnett [1])

WHEN I read your letter it seemed to me impossible that I could send any message to the American people. But thinking over it at night, it came to me that, if I had to address the American people, I should like to thank them for the great help I have received from their writers who flourished about the fifties. I would mention Garrison, Parker, Emerson, Ballou, and Thoreau, not as the greatest, but as those who, I think, specially influenced me. Other names are Channing, Whittier, Lowell, Walt Whitman — a bright constellation, such as is rarely to be found in the literatures of the world.

And I should like to ask the American people why they do not pay more attention to these voices (hardly to be replaced by those of financial and industrial millionaires, or successful generals and admirals), and continue the good work in which they made such hopeful progress.

[1] Quoted, with the editor's permission, from *The North American Review*, April, 1901.

THREE LETTERS ON REASON, FAITH, AND PRAYER

1

. . . You ask what my Christian confession of faith consists in.

You have read the *Short Exposition of the Gospel* and so you know how I understand Christ's teaching.

But if you wish to know in what I see the chief meaning of the teaching, which I should like to transmit to all men, in which I should like to see all children educated, — I would say that it consists in this, that man came into the world, not by his own will, but by the will of Him who sent him into the world. But for man to know what He who sent him into the world wants of him, — He implanted in him reason, by means of which man, if he only wants to, is always able to know the will of God, that is, what is wanted of him by Him who sent him into the world.

The Pharisees and scribes of our time always say that we must not believe our reason, because it will deceive us, but that we should believe them, and they will not deceive us. But they tell an untruth. If we are to believe men and, as it says in the Gospel, the traditions of men, we shall all creep in different directions, like blind puppies, and shall hate one another, as is really the case at present: a church Christian hates a Mohammedan, a Mohammedan hates a Christian, and the Christians hate one another, — an Orthodox hates a Catholic or an Old Believer, an Old Believer hates an Orthodox, and so forth.

But if we hold what reason dictates to us, we shall all unite, because reason is one and the same with all men, and nothing but reason unites men and does not hinder the manifestation of mutual love, which is proper to men.

Reason unites us, not only with men who live at the same time with us, but also with those who lived thousands of years before, and with those who will live after us. Thus we make use of everything produced by the reason of Isaiah, Christ, Buddha, Socrates, Confucius, and all other men who lived before us and believed in reason and served it. Do to others as you wish that others should do to you; do not avenge evil done to you by men, but pay good for evil; be continent, be chaste; not only do not kill men, but be not even angry with them; live in peace with all men, and many things more, — all that is the production of reason, and all that has been preached alike by Buddhists, and Confucianists, and Christians, and Taoists, and the Greek and Egyptian sages, and is preached by all good men of our time, and all agree upon all that.

And so, I repeat, the chief significance of the Christian teaching, in my opinion, consists in what is expressed in the Gospel in the parable about the labourers in the vineyard who were given the use of the vineyard, for which they were to pay the master, but they imagined that the vineyard was their own; and in the parable about the talents. The meaning is this, that men must do the will of Him who sent them into life, and this will consists in this, that men, as is said in another place, should be as perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect, that is, should as much as possible approach this higher perfection.

That God's will is only this we are also shown by our reason, and we are shown this so clearly that there can be no discussion about it, and no doubt. Any man who will think about it cannot help but see that in all affairs of life a man may meet and does meet obstacles, and

only in one thing does a man encounter no obstacles, — in his desire to perfect himself, to purify his soul from evil, and to do good to everything living. Nor is it stopped, or impaired, or interfered with by death, which stops, impairs, and deprives of meaning every other worldly matter. Death does not stop or impair this matter, because a man who does the will of Him who sent him, knowing that the work done by him is needed by the Master, calmly does it here so long as he has the strength to do it, and he knows that death does not destroy him, nor his relation to the Master, and that there, though in a different form, he will be in dependence on the Master and will have the same joy of a greater and ever greater participation in the life and the work of the Master, that is, God.

Thus do I understand Christ's teaching, and thus I should like to see all men understand it and the children brought up, so that they may not take upon faith what they are told about God and about life, but may believe what they believe, not because this is given out as the utterances of the prophets and of Christ, but because their reason tells them so. Reason is older and more reliable than all Scriptures and traditions, — it existed even before there were any traditions and Scriptures, and it is given to each of us directly from God.

The words of the Gospel that every sin will be forgiven except blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, in my opinion, have direct reference to the assertion that we must not trust reason. Indeed, if we do not trust reason, which is given us from God, whom shall we believe? Shall we believe those men who want to make us believe what is inconsistent with reason, which is given from God? . . .

2

. . . You ask what can give a feeble, corrupt, and debauched man, such as we all are, amidst the tempta-

tions surrounding him on all sides, the strength to live a Christian life?

Instead of answering, and before answering, this question, I will ask what it really means. We are so used to this question that it appears to us quite natural and intelligible, whereas it is not only not natural and not even intelligible, but, on the contrary, extremely surprising and strange for any sensible man who is not brought up in the superstitions of the church faith.

Why is it that a blacksmith who is forging iron, or a ploughman who is ploughing a field, does not ask where he shall find the strength for the achievement of the work undertaken by him, but does it to the best of his ability, errs and tries to correct his error, gets tired, stops, puts his work aside for awhile, rests himself, and again takes up his work? Is not every slave of God who tries to live a Christian life in the same condition? Even so a man, if he is sincere, will to the best of his ability live a Christian life, do the will of God, and, if he shall make mistakes, will mend his ways, and he will grow tired, and rest, and again take up the same business of his life, — approaching to the best of his ability the perfection of the heavenly Father which is pointed out to him.

The question as to where a man is to find the strength for a Christian life shows only that people have been assured that there are certain special means by means of which people may, without an hourly intensification of struggle, falls, repentance, risings, and again falls, and again risings, attain the necessary strength for a good, holy life. This superstition, that a man does not approach perfection by his own slow efforts, but is able to purify himself at once and become holy, is one of the most terrible and most harmful delusions, and it is this that is energetically preached by all the ecclesiastic faiths. Some assure their disciples that by means of the sacra-

ments of baptism, confession, and communion a man may free himself from sins; others assert that what saves a man from sins is his belief in redemption, in this, that Christ the God purified us with His blood. Either of them teach that we are also freed by supplicatory prayer to God about His forgiving us our sins and making us good, and not by our trying to become better.

This superstition is very harmful, because it includes a deception.

This deception, in the first place, is this, that a man may become entirely pure and holy, whereas this is impossible for a live man. A man cannot be perfect and sinless, — he can only more or less approach perfection, basing on this approach the whole meaning of his life. (I even think that life after death will consist, though in an entirely different form, in the same approach to perfection.) In this personal effort at perfection does the whole meaning and joy of life consist. And so, if perfection were to be attained by external means, we should be deprived of the very essence of life.

The deception, in the second place, is this, that man's forces are drawn away from what he ought to do, — to work over himself, — and are directed upon what he ought not to do. For us to depend on this, that the sacraments, or the belief in redemption, or prayer will contribute to our perfection, is the same as though a blacksmith, with iron and hammer in his hands, and having an anvil and a hot fire, should, instead of striking the iron, be trying to find a means for forging it, or praying to God to give him strength for work.

We could pray to God and try to invent means for perfecting ourselves, only if certain obstacles were put in our way and we ourselves did not have the strength to overcome them. In the matter of perfection, or of the Christian life, or of the fulfilment of God's will, God does not demand of us what we cannot do, but, on the contrary,

has seen to it that we have everything we need for the fulfilment of His will.

We are here, in this world, as in a hostelry, in which the master has arranged everything which we, the travellers, need, and has gone away, leaving instructions as to how we should act in this temporary refuge. Everything we need is at hand; so what means are we to discover and what are we to ask about? All we have to do is to fulfil what we are prescribed to do. Even so it is in the spiritual world, — everything we need is given to us, and the rest depends upon us.

Of course, if we want to be saints at once, or if we wish to feel ourselves justified, and, besides, rich, — if we wish that we and our friends should never grow ill or die, that we may always have good crops, and that our enemies may be destroyed, — we must ask God for all those things, just as they ask for these things in our churches. But God has intended nothing of the kind for us: He not only has not prescribed to us to be righteous and sinless, but, on the contrary, has given us life, the only meaning of which is that we should free ourselves from our sins and approach Him; and He has not intended us to be rich, without disease and immortal, but has given us trials, — poverty, diseases, the death of our friends, and our own death, — for the very purpose that we might not place all our life in wealth, health, and this temporal life, but might place it in the service of Him; and He has given us enemies, not that we might desire their ruin, but that we might learn to destroy the enemies with love; He has given us a law with which we fare well, if we fulfil it. Thus we have no reason to invent any special means of salvation or to ask God for anything. Everything we need is given to us, if we shall only follow the indications of our conscience and of God, as expressed in the Gospel.

In the third place, the deception is this, — and by this

it is harmful, — that men, having come to believe that they are not able with their own strength to do God's will and live well, stop working over themselves, and not only stop working, but also lose the possibility of perfecting themselves. A man need but assure himself that he cannot do what he should do, and his arms will drop, and he will indeed be unable to do what is necessary. Let a man convince himself that he is sick, and he will grow sick. Obsessed persons yell for the very reason that they believe they are obsessed. People who drink incontinently do not reform, because they are convinced that they cannot control themselves. There does not exist a more immoral and pernicious doctrine than that a man cannot perfect himself by his own efforts.

This reflection that for a good Christian life one's own efforts are not sufficient, but that some external force is needed, is precisely like the one according to which (I wrote you about it in my first letter) reason does not suffice for the cognition of the truth, but external proofs are needed. There it is assumed in advance that there is something which can give a man strength to live a Christian life and do God's will; and here it is assumed in advance that there exists something by which a man can know for certain that what is said to him is the undoubted truth. It is assumed that there exists a means for cognizing truth, the full and perfect truth, — outside of the personal effort of the mind. But that is as impossible as to see light without eyes. The truth is what is cognized through effort and cannot be cognized in any other way. The truth which is cognized by human reason can never be perfect: it can only approach perfect truth. Thus the truth may be the highest truth accessible to man at a given time, but can never be perfect for all times, — the indubitable truth. No proposition can be such a perfect truth for all time, for this reason, if for no other, that life, both the life of all humanity and that of each individual,

passes and even consists in the attainment of more and more perfect truth.

The perverse and insipid conception that human reason cannot with its own efforts approach truth is due to the same terrible superstition according to which a man cannot without any aid from without approach the fulfilment of God's will. The essence of this superstition is this, that the full, complete truth was revealed by God himself: for the Jews it was revealed on Mount Sinai, and later by various prophets; for the Christians it was revealed by Christ, the apostles, ecumenical councils, the church; for the Brahmins it was revealed in the Vedas; for the Buddhists — in the Tripitaka; for the Mohammedans — in the Koran. This superstition is terrible, in the first place, because it distorts the very conception of the truth; in the second place, because, having once recognized as the indubitable truth all those insipidities and abominations which are accepted as God's revelation in the Scriptures, people are obliged still more to distort common sense, in order to justify all these abominations and insipidities; and, in the third place, because, by recognizing the infallible external revelation as the source of truth, a man ceases to believe in the one means for recognizing the truth, — the efforts of his mind. A man who acts thus does what a man would do in search of a path, if, instead of making every effort for the discovery of the path, he should close his eyes and entrust himself to the guidance of the first man offering to lead him.

We are told: "How can we believe our reason, since we see that men who are guided by reason err? The men who are guided by reason, — the Protestants, — break up into an endless number of denominations, and even one man, in entrusting himself to his reason, passes from one teaching to another. Consequently," we are told, "reason may err, and it is impossible to depend upon it."

Why so? When a man believes in something, and his reason does not show him anything more true, he knows what for him is the highest truth, and he is right; then he learns a still higher truth, and he is again right in that he acknowledges it. Even so he is right when he recognizes a still higher and purer truth. That which is the highest, clearest, truest that a man can see or imagine to himself is for him the truth.

Very likely it would be very well and very desirable if all men recognized one and the same perfect truth all at once (though, if this happened, life would at once stop); but even if we admit that this would be desirable, not everything is done as we desire it. It may, most likely, seem desirable to irrational men that people should not be sick, or that there should be a means for curing all diseases, or that all people should speak one language; but all that will not happen because we imagine that all men will be cured by our medicine, or that all men will speak and understand Russian. If we imagine this, we shall only make things worse for ourselves, just as we make things worse for ourselves if we imagine that the full and eternal truth is revealed to us in Scripture, in tradition, and in the church. It was possible to imagine that in the beginning of Christianity, when one faith seemed possible; but in our time, when side by side we can see men of the most varied creeds, all of whom imagine that the full and eternal truth was revealed to them, and not to us, it is particularly stupid to imagine that we, who were born in our faith, and no others, are in possession of the full truth, even as this is imagined by the Buddhists, Mohammedans, Catholics, Taoists, and others. Such a false imagination is particularly harmful, because it disunites men more than anything else. Men ought to unite more and more, as Christ teaches and our reason and heart show to us, but such doctrines about revelation more than anything else disunite men.

People ought, besides, to understand that if a man believes in revelation, he does so only because reason tells him that he must believe in such or such a revelation, — Mohammedan, Buddhist, or Christian. Whether we will it or not, no truth can enter a man's soul against his reason. Reason is like a sifter which is attached to the thresher and fan, so that no grain can be received, except through this sifter. It may be that dirt is passing through the bolter, but there is no other way for obtaining the grain. If we imagine that we can have pure grain without sifting, we shall be deceiving ourselves and shall feed on dirt instead of bread, as is, indeed, the case with the churchmen.

Thus we must not imagine that everything is taking place as we want it to, but must understand that everything is done as established by God. But God has established human life in such a way that men cannot recognize the whole truth, but constantly approach it, and, in proportion as they understand the one truth more and more clearly, they approach each other more and more.

You also ask for my opinion as to Christ's personality, whether I regard Him as God; you ask me about His birth, about the life after death, about whom I mean by the Pharisees and the scribes, and about communion.

Christ I regard as a man like all of us; to regard Him as God I consider the greatest blasphemy and an obvious proof of paganism. To recognize Christ as God is to renounce God.

Christ I regard as a man, but His teaching I consider divine, to the extent to which it expresses divine truths. I do not know a higher teaching. It has given me life, and I try to follow it as well as I can.

About the birth of Christ I know nothing, and I do not need to know.

About the life after death we know that it exists, that

life does not end in death; but it is not given to us to know what this life will be, and we do not need to know.

By the Pharisees I understand preëminently the clergy, by the scribes I understand the learned who do not believe in God.

In regard to the eating of the body and the drinking of the blood, I think that this is a most unimportant passage in the Gospel, and that it signifies either the attainment of the teaching or a reminiscence, but in neither case is it of any importance, and in no case does it mean what the church fanatics understand by it. I have expounded my understanding of this passage as well as I could in my *Short Exposition of the Gospel.*

3

In my last letter I wrote to you on the uselessness of prayer, both as to the realization of our wishes in relation to the events of the external world, and also for the internal world, — for our perfection. I am afraid that through my fault you will not understand me as I should wish to be understood, and so I will add a few words about this subject, — namely, about prayer.

For external events: for this, that there should be rain, or that a man whom I love should live, or that I should be well and not die, — for this I cannot pray, because these events take place according to laws established by God once and for all, and in such a way that, if we act as we should, they are always beneficent for us. It is the same as though a good man should build me a house with strong walls and a roof which protect me, and I should whimsically wish to expand or change the position of the walls and should ask for that.

For our inner perfection we cannot pray, because everything we need for our perfection has been given to us, and we neither need nor can add anything to it.

But the fact that supplicatory prayer has no meaning does not mean that it is impossible and unnecessary to pray. On the contrary, I think that it is impossible to live well without prayer, and that prayer is a necessary condition of a good, calm, and happy life. In the Gospel we are shown how to pray and what a prayer should consist in.

In every man there is a spark of God, God's spirit, — every man is God's son. Prayer consists in this, that, having renounced everything worldly, everything which may distract my sentiments (the Mohammedans do well, when, upon entering a mosque or beginning to pray, they close their eyes and ears with their fingers), I evoke in myself the divine principle. The best way for doing this is to do what Christ teaches: to enter into the closet and to shut the door, that is, to pray in complete solitude, be it in the closet, in the forest, or in the field. A prayer consists in this, that, renouncing everything worldly, everything external, we evoke in ourselves the divine part of our soul, to transfer ourselves into it, by means of it to enter into communion with Him of whom it is a part, to recognize ourselves as God's slaves, and to scrutinize our soul, our acts, our desires according to the demands, not of the external conditions of the world, but of this divine part of the soul.

And such a prayer is not an idle emotion and excitation, such as are produced by congregational prayers with their singing, pictures, illumination, and sermons, but always helps life, by changing and directing it. Such a prayer is a confession, a verification of former acts, and an indication of the direction of future acts. Suppose I am insulted, and I foster ill-will toward a man and wish him evil, or do not wish to do him the good which I can do him; or I have lost property or a dear friend; or I live, acting contrary to my belief. If I do not pray as is proper, but continue to live among distractions, I am not

freed from that painful feeling of ill-will for the man who has offended me; even so the loss of property or of a dear friend will poison my life; and, in getting ready to act contrary to the dictates of my conscience, I shall be agitated. But if I verify myself with the aid of myself and of God, everything will be changed, — I will accuse myself and not my enemy, and will seek for an opportunity to do him good; my losses I will accept as a trial, and I will endeavour with humility to bear them, and in this will I find my consolation; and I shall be able to understand my acts; I will not, as before, conceal from myself that disagreement between my life and my faith, but will, repenting, try to bring them to an agreement, and in this endeavour I shall find peace and joy.

But you will ask: "In what should a prayer consist?"

Christ gave us a sample of a prayer in the Lord's Prayer, and this prayer, which reminds us of the essence of our life, which is, to be in the will of the Father and to fulfil it, and of our usual sins, — the condemnation of our brothers and our unforgivingness toward them, — and of the chief perils of our life, the temptations, remains until now the best and most complete of all the prayers which I know.

But, in addition to this prayer, a true, solitary prayer consists also of everything which in the words of other sages and saintly men, or in our own, takes our soul back to the recognition of our divine principle, to a more vivid and clear expression of the demands of our conscience, that is, to the divine nature.

A prayer is a scrutiny of our past and present acts according to the highest demands.

Thus I not only do not deny solitary prayer, which reëstablishes the divinity of our soul, but even consider it a necessary condition of the spiritual, that is, of the true, life. What I deny is the supplicatory and congre-

gational — the blasphemous — prayer, with its singing, images, tapers, and even performances.

I often wonder how this congregational and supplicatory prayer can exist among men who call themselves Christian, when Christ said distinctly and definitely that we should pray in solitude and that we must not ask for anything, because "before ye open your mouth, your Father knoweth what things ye have need of."

I will tell you about myself, — not at all thinking that this is good for all men and that all men should do so, — that I have long ago accustomed myself to praying every day in the morning in solitude. And my daily prayer is as follows:

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name." And after that I add from the Epistle of John: "Thy name is love. God is love. He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. No man hath seen God at any time, but if we love one another, He dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; for God is love."

"Thy kingdom come." And I add: "Seek ye the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. The kingdom of God is within you."

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." And with this I ask myself whether I truly believe that I am in God and God in me, and whether I believe that my life consists in increasing love in myself. I ask myself whether I am mindful of this, that to-day I live and to-morrow I am dead, and whether it is true that I do not want to live for my personal desire and human glory, but

only in order to do God's will. And I add Christ's words from the three gospels: "Not my will, but Thine be done; and not what I will, but what Thou wilt, and not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

"Give us this day our daily bread." I add: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work. Deny thyself, and take up thy cross daily, and follow me. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." I add: "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

"And lead us not into temptation." I add: "Beware of temptations, — lust, ambition, ill-will, gluttony, fornication, human glory. Do not do thine alms in the presence of men, and let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. Rejoice because they insult and shame you."

"But deliver us from evil." I add: "Beware of evil which cometh from the heart: evil thoughts, murder (every ill-will toward man), theft (the use of what you have not earned), fornication, adultery (even in thought), false witness, blasphemy."

I conclude the prayer again with words from the Epistle of John: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

Thus I pray every day, applying the words of this prayer to my acts and to my mental state, — at times with more soulfulness than at others.

Besides this prayer, I pray also when I am alone, — I read the thoughts of wise and holy men, not Christians and the ancients alone, and I think and search before

God for that evil which is in my heart, and try to pluck it out.

I also try to pray in life, when I am with people, and I am seized with passions. I then try to remember what took place in my soul during my solitary prayer, and the more sincere my prayer was, the easier I withstand the evil.

That is all I wanted to tell you about prayer, so that you may not think that I deny it.

Moscow, January 8, 1901.

TO THE TSAR AND HIS ASSOCIATES

Again murders, again street rioting, again there will be executions, again terror, false accusations, threats, and rage on one side, and again hatred, a desire for revenge, and a readiness for sacrifice on the other. Again all the Russians have divided into two hostile camps and commit and are getting ready to commit the greatest crimes.

It is very likely that the present agitation will be suppressed, though it is also possible that these soldiers, policemen, and officers of the army, upon whom the government relies so much, will comprehend that what they are compelled to do is the great crime of fratricide, and will refuse to obey. But even if the present agitation shall be suppressed, it cannot be put out, but will be fanned more and more in a secret form, and will inevitably sooner or later manifest itself with increased force and will produce still worse sufferings and crimes.

What is it for? What is it for, since it is so easy to be freed from it?

We turn to all of you who have power, from the Tsar, the members of the Imperial Council, the ministers, to the relatives, — the uncles, brothers, friends of the Tsar, — who are likely to have an influence upon him; we do not turn to you as to enemies, but as to brothers, who — whether you wish it or not — are inseparably connected with us in such a way that all the sufferings which we undergo reëcho in you, the more painfully if you feel that you might have removed these sufferings and did not do so, — see to it that an end is put to this situation!

To you, or to the majority of you, it seems that all that is taking place because amidst the regular current of life there appear restless, dissatisfied people, who stir up the masses and interfere with this regular current, that it is only these people who are to blame for everything, that it is necessary to quiet and bridle these restless, dissatisfied people, and then everything will be well, and that nothing need be changed.

But if the whole matter were due to the restless and bad people, all that would be necessary to do would be to catch them and shut them up in prisons, or to execute them, and then all the agitation would come to an end. But these people have for more than thirty years been caught, imprisoned, executed, deported by the thousand, and their number keeps increasing, and the dissatisfaction with the existing order of life not only keeps growing, but is spreading all the time and has taken hold of millions of the labouring people, a vast majority of the whole nation. It is evident that the dissatisfaction is not due to the restless and bad people, but to something else. And you, governing men, need but for a minute take your attention away from the sharp struggle with which you have been busy, — stop thinking naïvely, as was expressed in the late circular of the minister of internal affairs, that "the police need only in time disperse the crowd, and shoot into it if it does not disperse, in order that all be calm and quiet," — you need only stop believing this, to be able to see clearly the cause which produces the dissatisfaction among the masses and finds its expression in agitations, which are constantly assuming wider and deeper dimensions.

The cause is this, that, in consequence of the unfortunate, accidental murder of the Tsar who freed the masses, committed by a small group of men, who falsely imagined that they served the nation in this way, the government decided to keep from going ahead by renounc-

ing more and more the improper conditions of life under the despotic forms of government, and, imagining that salvation lay in those same coarse, obsolete forms, has not only not advanced in the last twenty years, in conformity with the general development and greater complexity of life, or been standing still, but has been going back, with this retrogressive motion more and more departing from the people and their demands.

Thus it is not the bad, restless people who are to blame, but you yourselves, the rulers, who do not wish to see anything but your own peace for the present moment. It is not a question of defending yourselves at once against an enemy who wishes you evil, — no one wishes you any evil, — but, having come to see the cause of the dissatisfaction of society, of removing it. All people cannot be wishing for discord and hostility; they always prefer to live in concord and love with their brothers. But if they now are agitated and seem to be wishing you ill, this is so because you appear to them as that barrier which deprives not only them, but also the millions of their brothers, of the best possessions of man, — liberty and enlightenment.

For people to stop being agitated and attacking you, so little is needed, and this little is so needed for yourselves, so obviously will give you peace, that it would be remarkable if you did not do it.

Only very little is to be done. What you ought to do is this:

In the first place, make the peasants in all their rights equal with all the other citizens, and so:

(*a*) Abolish the disconnected, stupid institution of County Council chiefs.

(*b*) Abolish those special rules which are established for the determination of the relations of the labourers to the employers.

(*c*) Free the peasants from the oppression of the pass-

ports in going from place to place, and also from the quartering, transportation, and village police duties (ten-men, hundred-men) which lie exclusively upon the peasants.

(*d*) Free them from the unjust obligation of paying other people's debts in consequence of mutual bail, and also from the emancipation payments, which have long ago covered the value of the land purchased.

And (*e*) above all else, abolish the useless, unnecessary, disgraceful corporal punishment, which has been established only for the most industrious, moral, and numerous class of people.

The equalization of the peasantry, which forms the vast majority of the people, in all its rights with the other classes is particularly important, because there can be no permanency and firmness in a social structure in which this majority does not enjoy equal rights with others, but exists in the form of slaves, who are weighed down with special, exclusive laws. Only with an equalization of the rights of the labouring majority with those of all the other citizens, and in its emancipation from disgraceful exceptions, can there be a firm structure of society.

In the second place, you must stop applying the so-called rules of increased protection, which does away with all the existing laws and turns the population over into the power of very frequently immoral, stupid, and cruel chiefs. The non-application of the increased protection is important, because this arrest of the actions of the general laws produces denunciations, and espionage, and encourages and provokes rude force, which is frequently employed against the labourers who are entering into conflicts with their masters and the landowners (nowhere are such tortures practised as where these rules are operative); but chiefly, because only thanks to this terrible measure have they begun more and more frequently to employ capital punishment, which more than anything

else corrupts people, which is contrary to the Christian spirit of the Russian people, which heretofore was not recognized in our law, and which forms the greatest crime, forbidden alike by God and by man's conscience.

In the third place, you must destroy all the barriers in culture, education, and instruction. You must —

(*a*) Make no distinction between the persons of the different classes in admitting them to be educated, and so you must abolish all the prohibitions of reading, instruction, and books, which exist exclusively for the masses, as though all these things were injurious for them.

(*b*) Admit to all the schools the persons belonging to all the nationalities and religions, not excepting the Jews, who for some reason are deprived of this right.

(*c*) Not interfere with the teachers when they carry on the instruction in those languages spoken by the children who attend school.

Above all else, (*d*) permit the foundation and conduct of all kinds of private schools, both lower and higher, by all persons who are desirous of devoting themselves to a pedagogical activity.

The emancipation of culture, education, and instruction from all the oppressions under which they suffer now is important, because it is only these restrictions which keep the labouring masses from freeing themselves from that ignorance which now serves the government as the main argument for the application of these restrictions to the masses. The emancipation of the labouring classes from governmental interference in matters of education would give the masses a chance much more rapidly and usefully to acquire all that knowledge which they need, and not that which is obtruded upon them; and the permission granted to private individuals to open and conduct schools would do away with the constant agitations among the student body, who are dissatisfied with the management of the institutions in which they study now.

If there were no restriction in the foundation of free private schools, the young people who are dissatisfied with the orders in the governmental institutions of learning would go over to those private institutions which would answer their demands.

Finally, in the fourth place, and this is most important, you must abolish all the restrictions of religious freedom. You must:

(*a*) Abolish all the laws by which every departure from the recognized state church is punished as a crime.

(*b*) Permit the opening and building of chapels, churches, and meeting-houses by the Old-ritualists, Baptists, Milkers, Stundists, and so forth.

(*c*) Permit religious gatherings and religious preaching to all the faiths.

(*d*) Not keep the people of the different faiths from bringing up their children in the confession which they regard as the true one.

It is necessary to do so, because, to say nothing of the truth, worked out by history and science and acknowledged by the whole world, that religious persecutions not only do not obtain their aim, but even produce a reverse action, by strengthening that which they intend to destroy, and to say nothing of this, that the interference of the temporal power in matters of religion produces the most harmful, and, therefore, the worst vice of hypocrisy, which Christ arraigned so vigorously, — the interference of the temporal power in matters of faith hampers both the individual person and the aggregate of men in their attainment of the highest good, — the union of men among themselves. But the union is not attained by a violent and impossible retention of men in the once acquired external confession of the one religious doctrine to which infallibility is ascribed, but only by the free motion of all humanity in its approximation to the one truth, which, therefore, is the only one that can unite men.

Such, we believe, are the most modest and practicable desires of the vast majority of the Russian society. The application of these measures will unquestionably pacify society, and will free it from those terrible sufferings and (what is worse than sufferings) crimes, which will inevitably be committed on both sides, if the government will care only for the suppression of agitations, leaving their causes untouched.

We turn to all of you, — the Tsar, the ministers, the members of the Imperial Council, and the Tsar's nearest friends and advisers, in general to all people in power, — for help in the pacification of society and in its liberation from sufferings and crimes. We turn to you, not as to people of another camp, but as to our involuntary fellows in thought and feeling, and our brothers.

In a society of men who are bound together some cannot fare well, while others fare badly, especially if the majority fares badly. Now all can fare well only when the strongest, most industrious majority, upon which society holds itself, fares well.

Help, then, improve the condition of this majority, especially in what is most important, in its freedom and its enlightenment. Only then will your situation, too, be tranquil and truly good.

This was written by Lev Tolstóy, who, writing this, tried to expound, not merely his own opinion, but the opinion of many most excellent, unselfish, sensible, and kind people, who wish for the same.

March 15, 1901.

THREE LETTERS CONCERNING SHOPOV

LETTER TO THE "FREE THOUGHT," A WEEKLY PUBLISHED IN SOFIA, BULGARIA

DEAR SIR: — I thank you for the information about Shopov. Although I was not quite able to understand his speech for the defence, I saw that he is a man who has profound convictions concerning the Christian truth.

He is very young, and so I feel terribly for his sake. God aid him to be, not the soil from which the seed sprouts rapidly, without being able to take firm root, but such as will produce fruit a hundredfold.

The longer I live and think, approaching death, the more I am convinced that the army, that is, the men who are prepared to commit murder, is the cause, not only of all the calamities, but also of all the corruption of manners in the world, and that salvation lies only in what is being done by dear, beloved Shopov (may God strengthen him).

The longer I live, the more I marvel at the blindness of our learned world (at times I think that this blindness is intentional), which offers every imaginable means for the salvation of men from their wretchedness, except the one which will certainly save them from wretchedness and from the terrible sin of murder, by which the existing order holds itself and which we make use of. The only ones who are not blind are the governments, which hold to the murders and so are afraid of Shopovs more than of the armies of their neighbours. You no doubt know Rus-

sian, and so you will forgive me for not answering you in the language in which you write. If you have any communication with dear Shopov, give him, if you please, my love, gratefulness, and respect, and this one piece of advice: let him not insist on his refusal, if he is doing it for the sake of men, and not for God, and let him be guided only by his relation to God.

I shall be very thankful to you, if you will keep me informed as to his future fate.

With the greatest respect, ever ready to serve you.

May 29, 1901.

LETTER TO G. SHOPOV

Dear Friend Georgi: — Your letter I received long ago, and I was very happy to receive it, and thank you very much for it, but did not answer it on account of ill health and a mass of work. Please continue to inform me concerning your situation. How do you bear your confinement? Is it severe? Do they admit visitors to you, and let you have books? Also let me know about your family relations: have you any parents? Who are your relatives, and how do they look upon your act? Can I not in some way be useful to you? If it is possible for you, translate your letters for me into Russian, and if not, write as legibly as possible, so that every letter may be made out; I shall then be able to make out the sense. Maybe it is hard for you to read my letters. But I assume that you understand Russian better than we understand Bulgarian. Their having tried you, not for the refusal to do military service, but for non-fulfilment of military orders, — that is what they always do. They cannot do anything else, and I truly pity them. And you, who are in their power and are deprived by them of liberty, must none the less pity them. They feel that truth and God are against them, and they cling to every-

thing to save themselves, but their days are counted. And the terrible revolution which you produce, without storming a Bastile, but by sitting in prison, destroys and will destroy all the present godless structure of life, and will give a chance for the new one to be founded. I have used all my powers in serving God in this, and if it can be transmitted to you, I should like to send you what I have written about it.

I send you my brotherly love.

August 10, 1901.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF "FREE THOUGHT," OF SOFIA, BULGARIA

Dear Sir: — From your letter I see that the Bulgarian government is not only coarse and cruel, but also astoundingly stupid (I say, the government, because I am convinced that the lower authorities would not treat this youth, who in any case ought to inspire sympathy and respect, with such barbarism and cruelty, if that did not correspond to the demands and wishes of the higher authorities). It is natural for the governments of the great states, like France and Germany, and for the most abominable government of my own country, to treat cruelly such men as Shopov, who by their lives and acts indicate the path of moral progress on which humanity is walking. They, that is, the governments, can do nothing else, because they are based on rude force, while moral progress consists in substituting for rude force the consciousness of the brotherhood of men, and so the governments are compelled to suppress every manifestation of true progress, which they actually do from a sense of self-preservation. But the small nationalities and states, like Bulgaria, Servia, Switzerland, and others, can obviously not attain anything through rude force. In the struggle with force they will always be crushed by the immeasur-

ably more powerful states, Austria, Germany, England, Russia.

The rôle of the small nationalities does not consist in aping and imitating the larger states, in surrendering themselves to militarism and to all the terrors and cruelties which are connected with it (as may be seen in the small example of Shopov's case), but, being free from the burden and rudeness of militarism, in going ahead, to the best of their abilities, on the path of moral progress, pointing out the path to the larger nations.

Thus Germany did, though not so much in the sense of moral, as of æsthetic and scientific progress, when it was divided up into small duchies and had not yet partaken of the poison of rude force, which is killing it spiritually. Thus acts little Switzerland, showing people an example and showing them the possibility of a union of liberty and social order.

How nice it would be, if your Bulgarian people would come in time to their senses, and, instead of introducing discipline and torturing men, only that they may not fall behind their erring neighbours, who imitate the larger nations, and to be able to fight with them, — how nice it would be if your good, industrious, sensible people should use all their forces in the establishment of liberty and equality for themselves, thus showing an example to the other nations, instead of trying to do what they cannot do, — frightening their neighbours with their disciplined army. How nice that would be!

But acts such as the torture of Shopov only cast disgrace on the government which commits them, and give us a bad opinion of the society which silently endures such dishonourable acts. Shopov is intentionally tortured as a soldier, although he from the start refused to be enlisted in the army, — not through caprice or a lack of a desire to be useful to people, but because military service, which has murder for its aim, is not in agreement

with that Christianity which the nation and the government of Bulgaria profess; and so the trial of Shopov, as having violated discipline as a soldier, is a lie and a deceit, which is practised by the government and its slaves on a defenceless, honest man. Even from the standpoint of the government, which may fear that, if Shopov's refusal is left unpunished, no one will be willing to serve, all the government could do, not only to observe justice, but also from a feeling of self-preservation, is to make him do some public work, which is not in disagreement with his belief.

With the fullest respect, your obedient servant.

Koréiz, Tauris Government, October 17, 1901.

THE TOLSTÓY SOCIETY OF MANCHESTER, ENGLAND [1]

DEAR FRIEND: — You are right in assuming that I must be interested in the "Tolstóy Society." But I am sorry that there is left in me enough vanity to be interested in it. I have always been of the opinion — and it cannot change — that to be a member of the ancient society, established by God at the beginning of the conscious life of humanity, is more productive for the individual and for humanity, than being a member of limited societies, which are organized by us for the attainment of those ends which we are able to cognize. I think that the preference which we show for our own societies is due to this, that the part which we play in them appears to us much more important than the one which we fulfil in the great society of God. But that is only self-deception: all three kinds of activity, mentioned by you in your letter, are more certainly attained by a man who considers himself to be a member of the great society of God, than by one who is a member of the "Tolstóy Society." Such a man, if he is sincere, — as I know that you are, — will, in the first place, disseminate, as well as he can, those ideas which have given him spiritual satisfaction and energy of life, without troubling himself whether they are Tolstóy's or anybody's else. In the second place, he will try with all his might to urge people to express their opinions concerning the most important questions of life. In the third place, he will strive

[1] Translated from the Russian translation of the English original.

to afford to every one with whom he comes into contact as much joy and happiness as he can; and he will also help those who fall into difficulties from a thorough following of Christ's teaching. A man who belongs to the great society of God will, besides, do many other Christian acts, which are neither foreseen nor determined by the "Tolstóy Society," nor by any other. I suppose there are some advantages in the union of men of similar thoughts into societies; but I think that the disadvantages are much more considerable than the advantages. And so I confess that for me it would be a great loss to change my membership in the great society of God for the apparently useful participation in any human society whatever.

I am sorry, dear friend, to differ from you, but I cannot think otherwise.

August 15, 1901.

LETTER TO AN ORTHODOX PRIEST

DEAR BROTHER: — I am sorry I do not know your patronymic. Your letter has given me much pleasure. You are the fourth priest in whom I find a full agreement, not with my views, but with the essence of Christ's teaching, which in its true significance is accessible to babes and cannot call forth any disagreement. And this gives me pleasure.

There is one thing in your letter which disturbs me. That is your mention of metaphysics and ecclesiasticism. I am afraid that you have formed your own metaphysics, or that you stick to the ecclesiastic metaphysics, which makes it possible for you with your views to remain a priest. From the fact that you have been serving ten years, I conclude that you are still a young man, young enough to be my son, if not my grandson, and so I will take the liberty of giving you an unasked advice as to how, in my opinion, a priest should act, if he has freed himself from superstition and has come to comprehend Christ's teaching in its full significance and wants to follow it. Being in a situation which is incompatible with the practice of Christ's teaching, — such are the situations of the warrior and the priest, — people frequently invent or adopt some complex, intricate system of metaphysics which is to justify their situation. It is against this offence that I should like to guard you. For a Christian there is and there can be no complicated metaphysics. Everything which in the Christian teaching may be called metaphysics consists in a simple, all-comprehensible proposition that all men are the sons of God,

brothers, and so must love the Father and the brothers, and so must act toward others as they would that others should act toward them. I think that every metaphysics above this was invented by the evil one for the purpose of harmonizing his discordant position with the Christian teaching. There are also priests, — I know such, — who, feeling the incompatibility of their position with a pure understanding of Christianity, think that they can justify themselves with this, that in their position they can better struggle against superstitions and spread the Christian truth. I assume that such a position is still more incorrect. In religious matters the end cannot justify the means, for the very reason that the means of departing from the truth destroy every possibility of attaining the end, which consists in the teaching of the truth. But the main thing is, that one has not been called to teach others (Matt. xiii. 8, 9), but only to perfect oneself in the truth and in love. Only by means of this self-perfection (without any thought of others) can a man act upon others.

Pardon me for retorting to what you have not told me and, perhaps, are not even thinking of; but, having received a powerful and joyous impression from your letter, I felt like telling you everything I think about the tragical position of a priest who has come to know the truth, about the best way out from this position, and about the dangers of this position.

The best way out from this position — a heroic issue — is, in my opinion, for the priest to collect his parishioners, to come out on the ambo to them, and, instead of a service and the worship of the images, to bow to the ground before the people, asking their forgiveness for having led them into error. The second way out is the one which ten years ago was chosen by a remarkable man, Priest Appólov, whom I knew from the Vyátka Seminary, and who was serving in the Stávropol Eparchy. He announced

to the bishop that he could not, on account of his changed views, continue to act as a priest. He was called out to Stávropol, and the authorities and the members of his family tormented him so much that he decided to go back to his place; but, staying there less than a year, he was unable to stand it any longer, and again resigned and had himself unfrocked. His wife left him. All these sufferings affected him so much that he died, as a saint, without having changed his convictions and, above all, his love.

That is a second way out; but I know how terribly hard it is, — in consideration of the family relations of every priest and in consideration of the surroundings, — and so I fully understand and by no means condemn a priest who through weakness remains a priest, in spite of his not believing in what he does. One thing I say and allow myself to counsel (precisely the same I advise those Christians to do of whom military service is demanded), and that is, not to use your reason for sophistry, so that it may appear that, while acting badly, you are doing well. Let a man only keep truth before him in all its purity, without compromising with his honesty, and he will find a means of acting in the best manner possible, in accordance with his strength. A priest who understands the true Christian teaching must, in my opinion, like any other Christian, in the first place, strive to know the truth in all its purity and fulness, — independently of his position, — and, in the second, according to his strength, change his position, making it approach the recognized truth. (This approach takes place of itself, if a man is sincere.) To what extent a man approaches it (for a priest this is very hard, because his position is not only far from truth, but even opposed and hostile to it), — to what extent and how a man approaches it, — that is his affair with God, of which outsiders cannot judge.

I send you my brotherly greeting.

August 15, 1901. Your loving brother.

LETTER TO A FRENCH PASTOR[1]

DEAR SIR: — I received your letter and thank you for the sentiments which you express to me. I also thank you very much for the excerpts from Auguste Sabatier. I am sorry that I know this remarkable man only by name and from references to him. The excerpts quoted by you concerning the comprehension of Christianity prove to me that I could be with him in complete communion of thoughts and feelings, as also with you and all those who share his comprehension.

There is, none the less, one point in which I do not agree with you, and that is, your representation of the necessity of the church, and, therefore, of pastors, that is of people vested with certain authority. I cannot forget verses 8 and 9 of Matt. xxiii., not because these verses are in the Gospel, but because for me it is an obvious truth that there can be no pastors, teachers, guides among Christians, and that it is this very violation of the Gospel law that has until now reduced almost to zero the preaching of the true Christian doctrine.

In my opinion, the chief meaning of the Christian teaching is the establishment of a direct communion between God and man. Every man who takes upon himself the rôle of a mediator in this communion keeps him whom he wants to guide from entering into direct communion with God, and — what is worse still — himself completely departs from the possibility of living in a Christian way.

[1] Translated from the Russian translation of the original French letter.

In my opinion, the acme of pride, a sin which more than anything else removes me from God, is to tell myself that I am able to help others to live well and to save their souls. All a man can do, if he strives to follow the Christian teaching, is to try to perfect himself as much as possible (Matt. v. 48), to use all his strength, all his energy, in this self-perfection. That is the only way of influencing one's neighbours and helping them on the path of goodness. If a church exists, its limits are not announced to any one, and no one can know whether he belongs to it or not. All a man can do and hope for is to strive to become a part of it, but no one can be sure that he has become such indeed, and still less can he assume that he has the right and the possibility of leading others. I beg you, dear sir, to pardon the frankness with which I expound my opinion, which is contrary to yours, and to believe my sentiments of sympathy and respect, with which I am always ready to serve you.

Yásnaya Polyána, August 26, 1901.

ON THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

(A letter to Pietro Mazzini[1])

My answer to your first question, "What does the Russian nation think of the Franco-Russian Alliance?" is this: The Russian nation — the real nation — does not have the slightest conception about the existence of this alliance; but if the masses even knew of it, I am sure that, since all the nations are absolutely alike to them, their common sense, as also their feeling of humanity, would show them that this exclusive alliance with one nation, to the exclusion of every other, can have no other purpose than to draw them into hostility, and perhaps into wars, with other nations, and so this alliance would be most disagreeable to them.

In reply to your question, "Does the Russian nation share the transports of the French nation?" I think I can say that not only does the Russian nation not share these transports (if they exist in reality, which I doubt very much), but if the masses knew everything that is being said and done in France in connection with this alliance, they would more likely experience a sentiment of distrust and antipathy for the nation which without any rational cause suddenly begins to manifest an unexpected and exclusive love for them.

In regard to the third question, "What is the significance of this alliance for civilization in general?" I think I am right in supposing that, since this alliance can

[1] Translated from the Russian rendering of the French letter.

have no other aim than war or the menace of war, directed against other nations, it cannot help but be harmful. As regards the significance of this alliance for the two contracting nationalities, it is clear that, as in the past, so in the future it will be a positive evil for both nations. The French government, the press, and all that part of French society which extols this alliance, have already made, and will be more and more compelled to make, concessions and compromises in the traditions of a free and humane nation, in order to pretend to agree, or actually to agree, with the intentions and sentiments of the most despotic, backward, and cruel government in all of Europe. That has been and will be a great detriment to France, while on Russia this alliance has already had, and will have, if continued, a still more deleterious effect. Ever since this ill-fated alliance, the Russian government, which at one time was ashamed of the opinion of Europe and counted with it, now no longer cares for it, and, conscious of the support of this strange friendship on the part of the nation which is considered to be the most civilized in the world, it is becoming with every day more reactionary, despotic, and cruel. Thus this savage and unfortunate alliance can, in my opinion, have no other than a most negative effect upon the well-being of the two nations, as also upon civilization in general.

Yásnaya Polyána, September 9, 1901.

ON THE STREET RIOTS

I HAVE read the *Popular Pamphlets.* The one about *How the Priests Have Enslaved the People with Christ's Teaching* is beautiful, and I subscribe to it with both my hands. So, too, the pamphlet *About the Stundists* is good.

The pamphlet *About the Street Riots* is very miserable. It is not only immoral, but also impracticable and simply stupid. If I were the government, I would print such pamphlets at government expense and would distribute millions of copies of them. Nothing can more thoroughly undermine or make impossible the people's confidence in the men who share the views expressed there, than such pamphlets.

What the pamphlet proposes is immoral, because, if a soldier has by a whole series of suggestions (hypnosis) been brought to this, that he is put to the necessity of either killing or enduring great suffering, and, besides, his intelligence is so bedimmed that he does not see the sin of murder, a man who would listen to the author of the pamphlet would prepare himself for murder, and would accomplish it, provoked to it by nothing very doubtful, but by the assertions of the author of the pamphlet, that the commission of the murder will make it better for him and for his brothers to live in the world.

What the pamphlet proposes is impracticable, because it is unreasonable to suppose that unarmed, undisciplined men should be able to take the arms away from armed and disciplined men, and if this should happen anywhere,

though there is but one chance in a thousand for it, those men who had seized the arms would immediately be crushed by real troops from other places.

It is stupid, because for men to prepare themselves for murder, if they wish to free themselves from murders and the threat of murder, means to give their enemies the only legitimate reason for using against them every possible act of violence, and even murder, and to justify all those which were committed before.

I think it is superfluous for me to proclaim that I do not agree with the men who share the views of the pamphlet concerning the street riots. I have for almost thirty years been repeating one and the same thing from all sides, namely, that the whole thing consists in the spiritual condition of men, that every act of violence is a sin, and that the violence of those who struggle against violence is madness. And so a sincere man will not confuse me with revolutionists who practise violence; but that an insincere man can calumniate any one he pleases in any way he may wish, — against this no one can protect himself, and there is even no need to do so.

December 2, 1901.

EXPRESSIONS ON THE KISHINÉV TRAGEDY

CABLEGRAM TO THE "NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW"

The government is to blame, in the first place, for exempting the Jews, as a special caste, from the common rights; in the second, for the forcible inculcation of idolatry, instead of Christianity, on the Russian people.

LETTER TO A RUSSIAN EDITOR

The terrible crime committed in Kishinév has affected me painfully. I partly expressed my relation to this affair in a letter to a Jew, an acquaintance of mine, a copy of which I here enclose.

The other day we sent from Moscow a collective letter to the Mayor of Kishinév, in which we expressed our sentiments in regard to this terrible matter.

It will give me great pleasure to coöperate with you in your volume of collections, and I will try to write something to fit the occasion.

Unfortunately, what I have to say, namely, that the government alone is to blame, not only for the Kishinév riots, but also for all that disorder which has taken possession of a certain small part of the Russian population, — by no means the masses, — unfortunately I cannot say so in a Russian publication.

May 6, 1901.

LETTER TO A JEW

I have received your letter. I have received several such letters. All my correspondents, who write like you, ask me to express my opinion about the Kishinév affair. It seems to me that in these requests there is a certain misunderstanding. It is assumed that my voice has some weight, and so I am asked to express my opinion of such an important event, so complex in its causes, as the awful deed committed in Kishinév.

The misunderstanding consists in demanding of me the activity of a publicist, whereas I am a man all absorbed in one very definite question, which has nothing in common with the appreciation of contemporary events, namely, with the religious question and its application to life. It is just as unreasonable to demand of me a public expression of opinion concerning contemporary events, as to demand it of any specialist who enjoys a certain reputation. I may — and I have done so — make use of some contemporary event for the purpose of illustrating an idea developed by me, but I am absolutely unable, even if I considered this necessary, to express my opinion, as the publicists do, on all contemporary, however important, events. If I had to act in this manner, I should be obliged to express thoughtless or trite ideas, repeating what has been said by others, and then, it is obvious, there would not exist that significance of my opinion, on the basis of which I am asked to express myself.

But as regards my relation to the Jews and the terrible Kishinév affair, I should think that all those who are interested in my world-conception ought to know what it is. My relation to the Jews cannot be any other than that to my brothers, whom I love, not because they are Jews, but because we and they, like all men, are the sons of one Father, God, and this love does not demand any effort of me, since I have met and know very good people among the Jews.

But my relation to the Kishinév crime is also determined of itself by my religious world-conception. Even then, after the first newpaper report, I understood all the horror of what had taken place, and experienced a heavy mixed feeling of pity for the innocent victims of the bestiality of the crowd, of perplexity in regard to the beastliness of these people, who call themselves Christians, of disgust and abhorrence toward those so-called cultured people who stirred up the crowd and sympathized with its deeds, and, above all, of horror before the real culprit, our government, with its stultifying and fanaticizing clergy and with its robber gang of officials. The Kishinév tragedy is only a direct consequence of the propaganda of lies and violence, which the Russian government has conducted with such tension and stubbornness.

But the relation of the government to this event is only a new proof of its coarse egoism, which does not stop before any cruelties, when it is concerned about the suppression of a movement which seems to it to be dangerous, and of its complete indifference — resembling the indifference of the Turkish government to the Armenian atrocities — to the most terrible cruelties, so long as they do not touch its own interests.

This is all I can say *à propos* of the Kishinév affair, but I have said all that before.

But if you ask me what, in my opinion, the Jews should do, my answer again results naturally from that Christian teaching which I try to understand and which I try to follow. The Jews, like any other people, need but this for their good: as much as possible in their lives to follow the universal rule, — to act toward others as they would that others should act toward them, and to struggle with the government, not by means of violence, — this means must be left to the government, — but by means of a good life, which not only excludes every violence against one's neighbour, but even every participation

in violence and all use for one's advantage of the instruments of violence, as established by the government.

This is all — it is both old and well known — I have to say on the occasion of the terrible Kishinév tragedy.

Yásnaya Polyána, April 27, 1903.

. . . When the children ask whether those who destroy and loot the property of their neighbours and torment and kill them are doing right, there is but one answer, namely, that such men are great criminals, who violate God's chief law of the brotherhood of all men and of love among themselves.

But if they ask who is to blame for such evil deeds, I should answer that it is the Russian government that is to blame, in the first place, because it deprives the Jews of the most primitive and natural rights and makes of them a separate caste; in the second place, because it inculcates upon the Russian people an idolatrous religion, called Christian Orthodoxy, and, concealing the true Christianity from the people, in every way corrupts them.

But if they ask what the Jews are to do in order to free themselves from these calamities, I should answer that the Jews should do what all people should always do, especially in times of calamities, that is, of trials, — they should try more and more clearly to know God's law and more and more carry out in life God's one and eternal law of union and love, which is expressed in the utterance about doing unto others as we would that others should do to us.

These are all the answers which I can give to your questions and to the questions of your pupils. I shall be very glad, if they satisfy you and them.

1903.

LETTERS SINCE JANUARY, 1902

ANSWER TO A SWEDISH SOCIETY OF ARTISTS AND SCHOLARS

GENTLEMEN: — The award of the Nobel Prize to some one else, and not to me, was doubly agreeable to me: in the first place, it saved me the hard necessity of disposing in one way or another of the money, which is by all other men considered to be very useful and necessary, but by me a source of every kind of evil; in the second place, it gave some people whom I respect an occasion for expressing their sympathy to me, for which I thank them with all my heart.

Gáspra, January 20, 1902.

DEAR ———: — I fully agree with you in what you write. I slowly came to this conviction and now hold it firmly: I have expressed it in my article, *What Is Religion, and in What Does Its Essence Consist?* which Tchertkoff is, no doubt, printing now.

But there is one very important point on which I differ from you: indeed, at the present time, especially with us in Russia, the ecclesiastic and governmental deceptions form the chief obstacle for the establishment of the Christian life or even of an approach to it, but it cannot be said that a struggle with these deceptions forms the chief object of a Christian. The chief object of a Christian, by means of which he attains all ends, among them the one which now confronts one in Russia, is everywhere

and always this one: to kindle his fire and to make it shine before people. But the diversion of a man's whole attention, of all his efforts to some one private purpose, as, for example, to a life of manual labour, to preaching, or, as in the present case, to a struggle with these or those deceptions, is always a mistake, like what a man would do at an inundation, if, instead of letting the water out of the chief source or working on the dam which retains the water, he should busy himself with putting up barriers in his street, without observing that the water will inundate him from some other side.

Having received your letter I intended to write to you, to remind you that in the struggle we must be as wise as the serpents, and as meek as the doves; but that is not enough: we must not for a minute forget the main end and must not abandon ourselves to working for the attainment of some private end. This means not that we should not struggle against the deceptions (knowing that they are the greatest evil we shall do so involuntarily), but that we should struggle against them only when this struggle appears as the result of the general striving after self-perfection. Another comparison: the houses have to be protected against the possibility of catching fire one from another. It is possible to cut a lot of green branches and stick them between the houses, and for a day or two this will apparently be right. But it is also possible to set out a lot of young trees, and when these take root and grow up it will indeed be for all times. It is necessary for our activity to have roots. These roots are in our submission to the will of God, in our personal life, when devoted to self-perfection and the increase of love.

My physical health is still bad, but spiritually I feel very well, and I can work, and do work as well as I can, and more seriously, in view of the near end. I think of you and love you and am afraid for your zeal.

Gáspra, January 20, 1902.

. . . Let us become Chuvashes and listen, not to two prophets (there are no prophets), but to two men.

One says to the Chuvash: "Do you feel in yourself anything outside your body?" — Every Chuvash will say that he feels something spiritual, thinking, loving. — Then we shall ask him: "Is the spiritual being which you feel in yourself almighty?" — The Chuvash will say that it is not, that he feels that this being is limited. — Then we shall say to him: "But if the being which you recognize in yourself is limited, there must be a being which is unlimited. This unlimited being is God, whose essence you feel in yourself limited, and who, as an unlimited being, embraces you in such a way that you are in Him." — Thus will the first man speak, without asserting about himself that he is from God, that he is a prophet, but only asserting what everybody knows and may observe in himself.

Another, Mohammed, will begin by saying: "Believe me that I am a prophet and that everything which I shall tell you which is written in my Koran is the veritable truth, as revealed to me by God Himself." And he will go on to expound all his doctrine. To this the Chuvash, if he is not altogether a fool (and there are many clever men among them), will say: "Why should I believe you that everything you say is from God? I did not see God transmit His truth to you, and I have not the slightest proofs that you are a prophet, the more so since I have been told that there are Taoists, Buddhists, Brahmins, Mormons, who have just such prophets as you, who say of themselves precisely the same as what you say of yourself. Thus, your saying about yourself that you are a prophet cannot in the least convince me that what you say and what is written in the Koran is the veritable truth. Your having flown to the seventh heaven does not convince me in the least, because I did not see it. But what is written in the Koran is not quite clear, and

often intricate, wordy, arbitrary, and even historically incorrect, as I have heard from people. What can alone convince me is what I cognize myself and am able to verify by reasoning and inner experience."

Thus will the clever Chuvash speak in reply to the words of the second man, and I think he will be quite right.

So this is what I think about Mohammedanism. It will be a good teaching and will coincide with the teaching of all truly religious men, only when it shall reject the blind faith in Mohammed and the Koran and will take from that belief what is in agreement with the reason and the conscience of all men. . . .

November, 1902.

. . . I have for the last twenty years established such a relation to God and the demands arising from this relation; and with this relation I have been living until the present, and the longer I live, the more I am confirmed in it; and, approaching death, which I await every day, I experience full peace and equal joy of life and of death.

My belief does not agree with yours; but I do not tell or advise you to give up yours and accept mine. I know that this is as impossible for you as to change your physiological nature, — to find a taste in what is nauseating to you, and vice versa. And so I not only do not advise you to do so, but, on the contrary, advise you to stick to what is your own and to work it out still farther, if it is at all subject to development.

A man can believe only what he is led to believe by the aggregate of all his spiritual forces.

Each of us looks at the world and at the beginning of it through the little window which he himself has cut out or chosen of his free will. And so it may happen that a man who sees dimly and whose window is not clear may himself, of his own will, pass over to another man's win-

dow; but it is quite unreasonable and, to say the least, impolite to call a man, who is satisfied with what he sees, away from his window to your own.

We all see one and the same God, we all live by His will, and we all, looking at Him from various sides, are able to do His chief law, — to love one another, — in spite of the difference of our view of Him. . . .

March, 1903.

. . . You do not understand what is meant by the word "God," and the mention of this word always irritates you. From this you conclude that "it is time for humanity to stop talking of God, whom no one understands."

It is very natural for you to be irritated by the use of a word the meaning of which you do not understand. It is always so. But your conclusion that no one understands what God is, because you do not understand it, is, to say the least, strange. The fact that all mankind has always used this word, being in need of the concept, ought to have led you to the thought that it is not humanity that is to blame, but you, for not understanding that which is understood by the whole of mankind or a great majority of it, and that, therefore, you ought not to advise mankind to stop talking of God, but should yourself try to understand what you do not understand.

Every man, like yourself, must of necessity recognize himself to be a part of something infinite. It is this infinite, of which man recognizes himself to be a part, that is God.

For unenlightened men, to which division belong the vast majority of the so-called learned, who do not understand anything but matter, God will be matter, endless in time and space. Such a concept of God will be very silly, but still they will have a God of their own, no matter how silly. But for enlightened men, who understand that the beginning and essence of life is not in matter, but in

the spirit, God will be that infinite unlimited being which they recognize in themselves within boundaries limited by time and space.

And such a God has been recognized and acknowledged and will be acknowledged by mankind at all times, so long as it does not fall into a beastly state.

1903.

. . . You say that you cannot believe in God the Creator, who created man and all beings, which are subject to diseases, struggle, sufferings.

But the concept of God the Creator is an old superstition, which it is not only superfluous, but even harmful to believe in. We have not the slightest right to imagine a God the Creator.

All we can assert is this, that we exist amidst the world, which presents itself to us as infinite in space and time, and that the basis of our life is something immaterial. We recognize this principle in ourselves in a limited condition, and in consequence of it cannot help having a concept of this immaterial principle, which is not limited and not subject to conditions of time and space. This principle we call God.

This basis of our life cannot be good or evil. It is that which is, *τὸ ὄν*. What we call evil is merely our ignorance of the consequences of what we see only the causes of.

The true teaching of life, which has been preached by all the sages, Buddha, Confucius, the Brahmins, Lao-tse, Isaiah, and Jesus, consists in the recognition of that immaterial principle which forms our life. Only on the conciousness of this principle may be based and actually is based my belief in my existence, — not the future, but the everlasting existence. The moment I am convinced that life consists in the immaterial principle, as cognized by me, recognized by me as my true ego, I can no longer

believe in the destruction of this extratemporal and extraspatial ego.

The concept of death is only an error, which is called forth by the false concept that man's real ego is a material integument.

Such are, in a few words, the causes which make me think that death is not an evil, but a change of form, which can be only a progress in life, just as, according to my observation, is all that which during this existence is taking place in me and in all beings.

1903.

. . . John iii. 13, in my opinion, means this, that every man is a son of God, and in every man there is a particle of the divinity. The next two verses mean, that this particle of God, which is in every man, must be glorified in each of us, and this glorifying will free us from all evils, as did the glorified serpent in the wilderness.

The idea is, that man must recognize himself to be the son of God, and so he must recognize all other men to be. If man only understood and remembered who he is, he would not abase and defile his dignity with contemptible, low cares and acts. And if he remembered that every man is just such a son of God, he would not permit himself to insult and despise men, — the sons of God and his brothers.

In these verses is the essence of Christ's teaching. . . .

1903.

No one, much less I, can be out of sympathy with his plan of a universal strike. But for such a thing to take place, it is necessary for people to be united in one comprehension. Such union of men in one comprehension is given by religion only. And so, to attain the end toward which he is striving, it is necessary to contribute to the dissemination and establishment of the one true

religion. It is as impossible to arrange a universal strike from men of various conceptions of life, as it is impossible to bake bread from rye that has not yet matured and is still in the ear.

1903.

I was very glad to receive your letter, dear ———.

I have for a long time been thinking of you and of those subjects of which you write, the most important subjects in the world.

I have not only not changed my view of myself gratifying my own prime needs, but even feel more vividly than ever the importance of it and the sin of my non-fulfilment of it. There have been many causes which have drawn me away from this fulfilment, but I will not count them over, because the chief cause is my weakness, my sin. And so the reception of your letter has been a spiritual joy for me, — an arraignment and a reminder. There is one thing that consoles me, and that is, that, while I lived badly, I did not deceive, did not justify myself, and never said to myself that I could free myself from this labour, for the reason that I write books; I have always recognized what you say, — that just as I have to read a good book, so does he who works for me, and that, if I am able to write a good book, there are hundreds and thousands of men who could write better books, if they were not oppressed and crushed by work. Thus I not only do not disagree with you, but also, being conscious of my sin and suffering from it, more strongly than ever recognize the prime importance of denying the right to use the extorted labour of another man.

As I thought and heard of you, I recognized the whole burden of your situation, and at the same time did not stop envying you. Do not lose your courage, dear friend. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved," refers directly to your situation. I think that no worry can

keep a man from thinking rightly (as I, indeed, see from your letter). What interferes with right reasoning is idleness and luxury, and that I frequently feel in my own case.

However strange and bad it may seem that I, who live in luxury, should permit myself to advise you to continue living in want, I do so boldly, because I cannot for a minute doubt that your life is a good life before your own conscience, before God, and so most necessary and useful to men; while my activity, no matter how useful it may appear to some people, loses, — I wish to hope, not everything, — but certainly the greatest part of its meaning, in consequence of the non-fulfilment of the chief symptom of the sincerity of what I profess.

The other day I had a visit from a clever and religious American, Bryan, and he asked me why I considered simple manual labour indispensable. I told him almost the same as you write, that, in the first place, it is a sign of sincerity in recognizing the equality of all men; in the second, it brings us nearer to the majority of labouring men, from whom we are fenced off by a wall, if we make use of their want; in the third, it gives us the highest good, peace of mind, which does not exist and cannot exist in the case of a sincere man, who makes use of the services of slaves.

So this is my answer to the first point of your letter. Now as to the second, the most difficult point, that about the religious education.

In education in general, both physical and mental, I assume it to be most important not to force anything on the children, but to wait and answer their demands, as they arise; this is most particularly necessary in the chief subject of education, — in religious education.

As it is useless and harmful to feed a child when he does not want to eat, or to force upon him information which does not interest him and he does not need, so it is

even more harmful to impress children with any religious conceptions for which they do not ask, and for the most part to formulate them coarsely and thus to impair that religious relation to life which at this time may unconsciously arise and establish itself in the child.

All that is necessary, it seems to me, is to answer with absolute truthfulness the questions put by the child. It seems very simple to answer truthfully a child's religious questions, but in reality this can be done only by him who has answered truthfully to himself religious questions about God, life, death, good, and evil, — those very questions which children always put very clearly and definitely.

Here there is confirmed what I have always thought of education and what you say in your letter, namely, that the essence of the education of children consists in the education of oneself. However strange this may seem, this self-education is the most powerful weapon which parents have for influencing their children. And that first article, which your future lady neighbours have made their own, namely, "Perfect yourself," is the highest and, however strange this may seem, the most practical activity (in the sense of serving other men, influencing other men) which a man can have. Even so the conditions of your hard life, which you, no doubt, do not properly appreciate, are most advantageous in the matter of education. Your life is *serious*, and your children see and understand it.

But if you want from me a more definite indication as to what to read or put into the children's hands for the purpose of religious education, I should say that it is not right to confine oneself to the religious writings of one belief, — in our case, that of Christianity, — but one should use the Buddhist, Brahmin, Confucianist, Jewish religious literature on a par with the Christian.

This communion with you has given me very, very

much pleasure. I wish it could be one-hundredth part as useful to you as it is to me, and so I wish it were frequently repeated.

Yásnaya Polyána, December 10, 1903.

EXTRACTS

From Unpublished Diaries, Undated Letters, Etc.

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Of late I have been shocked, not by physical disfigurements and sores, but by spiritual ones, of which the most obvious disfigurements are the words of one who uses all methods for concealing the truth and advancing the lie in place of the truth.

The sophism of Pobyedonóstsev's retort is this: we have complete religious toleration; we allow the erection of churches of all religions and the celebration of divine services in them, — of christening, marrying, burying, taking the oath, and so forth, according to the custom of each; but we prohibit every religion from preaching its doctrine, that is, from converting from Orthodoxy, as they call it. It is assumed that religion consists only in the fulfilment of certain external acts of life, — in divine service, burials, christening, marriage, swearing, and nothing else, — and that every religion is permitted to perform these acts according to its own rites, that is, a Mohammedan is not compelled to have his children baptized, and so forth. This is not religious toleration, but the absence of violence, such as would not cause any men of a strange faith to go to Russia. We have not here as yet anything to do with religion. This is dead form, while religion is

something living. It is something living, if for no other reason, because new men are born all the time, and for them exists the question, "Of what religion?" This question is again decided in a dead way, that is, the children are of their parents' religion. Consequently it is not a religious, but a civil question; now the civil question is not decided on the basis of what ought to guide every civil act, — justice: (1) Children one of whose parents is Orthodox must be Orthodox; (2) one may orally and in writing preach Orthodoxy, but no other religion; (3) it is permissible to convert to Orthodoxy, that is called missionary work, but not to any other religion.

These three points do not exist in other countries, and so there is there religious toleration, but we have it not.

I explained a factory to Stepán. Calico is cheap, because they do not take into consideration the people that are ruined and do not live long. If they did not take into consideration the horses that are ruined at post-stations, driving, too, would be cheap. But let people have the value of horses at least, and you will see what an ell of calico will be worth. The trouble is, people give their lives cheaply, not according to their values. They work for fifteen hours and leave the loom, with troubled eyes, like dazed men, — and so every day.

Three thousand women, getting up at four and leaving work at eight o'clock, and becoming corrupt, and shortening their lives, and distorting their generation, live wretchedly (amidst temptations) in this establishment, in order that the useless calico be cheap and N. N. may have money, whereas he is troubled what to do with the money which he already has. They establish a management, improve it. For what? In order that this ruin of men and ruin in different forms may be successfully and uninterruptedly continued. Wonderful.

Here are seven counts of an indictment of the government: (1) The church — deceit, superstition, waste; (2) the army — debauchery, cruelty, waste; (3) punishments — corruption, cruelty, infection; (4) large ownership of land — hatred, poverty, cities; (5) factory — murder of life; (6) drunkenness; (7) prostitution.

Read Slyeptsóv's *Hard Times*. Yes, there were different demands in the sixties. And because with these demands was connected the murder of the first of March, people have imagined that these demands were irregular. Indeed not. They will exist until they are fulfilled.

The positivists, liberals, revolutionists, and all so-called non-Christian sects believe in the same truth of Christ in which we believe, only not in the whole truth, and under a different name; and so we must not dispute and quarrel with them, but make friends with them.

What a terrible suffering to know that I am suffering and losing my life, not from an avalanche, not from bacteria, but through people, through brothers, who ought to love and who, behold, hate me, if they cause me suffering. That was when they led the Decembrists to execution, that is the unfortunate prisoners in Kára, and so forth. Terrible.

One of the most impudent cases of disobedience to Christ is divine service, common prayer in temples, and calling the clergy fathers, whereas, "And when thou prayest," etc. (Matt. vi. 5–8; xxiii. 8).

The anarchists are right in everything, — in their negation of the existing order and in their assertion that it will not be worse without the power than, with the existing customs, it is with the violence of the power. But

they are mistaken in thinking that anarchy can be established by means of revolution, — that anarchy can be instituted. Anarchy will establish itself; but this will happen because a greater and ever greater number of people will not need the defence of the governmental power, and a greater and ever greater number of people will be ashamed to apply this power.

When N. was a baby, he used to go to bed playing and ask the nurse to continue playing while he was sleeping. Just so the Orthodox people ask their popes to pray for them while they are asleep.

The good doctrine which gets into the church, as in the case of Tíkhon Zadónski, is due to this, that in the net of the bad doctrine, which is intended for concealing Christ's teaching from people, there are found good men, Christians in spirit, and they, without rending the net, introduce as much good as they can into it.

Thanks to the censorship, our whole literary activity is an idle occupation. The one necessary thing, which justifies the occupation with it (literature), is put aside by literature. It is as though a carpenter were permitted to plane, provided he made no shavings. In vain do the writers imagine that they are deceiving the governmental censorship. They cannot deceive it, as you could not deceive a man if you wanted softly, without his knowledge, to put a mustard plaster on him. Let it begin to act, and he will tear it off.

The governmental form is now a survival of methods which were necessary before, but now are superfluous; just as goats climb walls and poles, an act which used to be useful to them, but now is of no use to them.

All life is irrational: irrational is a man's useless blind gut, the survival of the horse's fifth toe, and all the superfluities and atavisms of everything living; irrational, above all else, is the struggle for existence, — a useless waste of energy.

Man introduces reason into the world of Nature, destroying irrational struggle and waste. But this activity is outside of self, distant, only reflected. Man sees this irrationality only with his intellect.

But the irrationality of his own life he not only sees with his intellect, but also feels with his heart, as contrary to love, and with his whole being. And in this rationalization of what is irrational in his life does his life consist.

What is very important here is this, that the irrationality in Nature is cognized with the intellect, while the irrationality in human life itself is cognized with the heart (through love) and the intellect.

Man's life consists in rationalizing what is irrational in his life. And so two things are necessary for it:

(1) To see the irrationality of life in all its significance and not to turn one's attention away from it.

(2) To recognize in all purity the rationality of the possible life.

In recognizing the whole irrationality of life and the wretchedness, which always results from it, a man involuntarily turns away from it; and, on the other hand, in clearly recognizing the rationality of a possible life, a man involuntarily strives toward it. Therefore, not to conceal the evil of the irrationality and to point out in all its clearness the good of the rational life will form the problem of all the teachers of humanity.

But here Moses' judgment-seat is always occupied by those who do not go toward the light, because their deeds are evil; and so the people who pose as teachers not only do not try to elucidate the irrationality of life and the

rationality of the ideal, but, on the contrary, conceal the irrationality of life and undermine the confidence in the rationality of the ideal.

This takes place in our life. The whole activity of the men of the world consists in the concealment of the irrationality of life; for this purpose there exist and act:

(1) The police, (2) the army, (3) criminal laws, prisons, (4) philanthropic establishments: homes for children and for old people, (5) educational homes, (6) houses of prostitution, (7) insane asylums, (8) hospitals, especially for syphilitics and consumptives, (9) insurance companies, (10) fire brigades, (11) all compulsory educational institutions, which are established on money collected by force, (12) institutions for minor criminals, agronomic institutions, exhibitions, and many other institutions.

If one-thousandth part of the energy employed in the establishment of all this, which has for its aim the concealment of the evil and which only increases it (it is interesting to follow out how, in a fatal manner, each of these institutions, besides concealing the evil, begets a new evil and irrepressibly, like a snowball, increases that evil which it proposes to destroy, — examine the educational and orphan homes, insane asylums, prisons, army), were used for counteracting all that for which these institutions exist, the evil, which now is obvious to us and which torments us, would be quickly destroyed.

At fairs they have poles to be climbed for prizes. Such a method of entertainment — at times to entice men (to let a man ruin his health), or a walking match in sacks, with us looking on — could have arisen only with a division of men into masters and slaves.

All the forms of our life have arranged themselves as they have, only because there existed this division: acrobats, waiters, privies, the production of mirrors, visiting-

cards, all the factories, — everything could have arisen as it is, only because there was that division into masters and slaves.

And we want brotherly love, having retained the slavish forms of life.

Twelve-year-old ones have been commanded to swear. Do they really imagine they are binding these children? Does not this very demand show obviously their guilt and their consciousness of it?

They want to retain and save the drowning autocracy, and they send Orthodoxy out to its aid. But the autocracy will drown Orthodoxy and then will itself go down so much the more quickly.

A man is considered disgraced, if he has been beaten, if he is accused of stealing, of fighting, of not paying his card debts, and so forth; but how if he has signed a sentence of death, has taken part in an execution, has read somebody else's letters, has put people in prison?

That is certainly worse.

People, in their struggle with lies and superstitions, frequently find consolation in the number of superstitions which they have destroyed. That is not correct. It is impossible to find consolation until everything is destroyed which contradicts reason and demands faith. Superstition is like cancer, — everything must be cleaned out, if an operation is to be undertaken. Leave a small particle, and everything will grow out again.

When you chop a rough block, the first stroke rebounds as from steel, and you think that you are not doing anything, and that it is in vain to strike. And woe, if you lose courage. But strike again, and soon you will

hear dull sounds. That means, that it has moved. A few strokes more, and the block will be chopped.

In such a situation the world is in relation to the Christian truth. How I remember the time when the strokes rebounded and I thought that it was hopeless.

The same is true of people. We must do like the man who began to draw the water out of the ocean. If a man gives his life for any work, no matter what this work may be, it will be done, and much more so God's work.

They say that one swallow does not make a spring; but is a swallow, because one does not make a spring, to wait, though it already feels the spring? If so, then every bud and grass blade ought to wait, and there will be no spring.

There came to me a series of thoughts about the blindness of the men who are struggling against the anarchists by means of destroying the anarchists, and not by means of the correction of that order of life, because of the monstrousness of which the anarchists are fighting.

By a vast and all-round labour of thought and speech the comprehension is diffused among men, is acquired by them in the most varied forms, and, making use of the strangest of means, takes possession of men, — one from fashion, one from boasting, under the guise of the liberalism of science, philosophy, religion, — and becomes proper to men. Men believe that they are brothers, that it is impossible to impress brothers, that it is necessary to help progress and culture, and struggle with superstitions; it becomes public opinion, and suddenly — the terror of the French Revolution, the First of March, the assassination of Carnot, — and all the labour is lost for nothing. The water which is carefully collected drop by drop by means

of a dam goes off by one stroke and uselessly washes away fields and meadows.

How can the anarchist help seeing the harmfulness of violence? How I should like to write to them about it! Everything is so, everything is correct which they discuss and do, in spreading the ideas about the uselessness and harmfulness of the governmental violence. Only one thing must be changed by them, — violence and murder by a non-participation in violence and murder.

I have received an Italian book on teaching Christianity in school.

A beautiful idea about teaching religion being violence, that offence against the children of which Christ spoke. What right have we to teach what is disputed by the vast majority, — the Trinity, the miracles of Buddha, Mohammed, Christ? The only thing we can and must teach is the moral teaching.

A charming expression I heard from N.

We were speaking of the impression produced on peasants by books. It is hard to please them, because *their life is very serious.*

That is a superb sentence. If only a large number of men of our world could understand it!

We were looking at an exquisite sundown. In the towering clouds a rent, and there, like a red, irregular piece of coal, the sun. All that near the forest. A joy.

And I thought: no, this world is no jest, not merely a dale of trials and a transition to a better, an eternal world; this is one of the eternal worlds, which is beautiful and joyous, and which we not only can, but must make more beautiful and more joyous for those who live with us and for all those who will live in it after us.

There are two ways for cognizing the external world:

One is the grossest and most inevitable method of cognizing by means of the five senses. From this method of cognition we should not have formed that idea of the world which we know, but there would be chaos, which gives us various sensations.

The other method consists in this, that, having recognized ourselves through the love of ourselves, we then recognize the other beings through our love of them: we transfer ourselves in thought into another man, animal, plant, even stone. In this manner you cognize externally, form the whole world, as we know it.

This method is what is called the poetic gift; and this, too, is love. It is, so to speak, the reëstablishment of the violated union between the beings. You go out of yourself and enter into another. And you can enter into everything. All-unite with God, with everything.

In every moral, practical prescription there is a possibility of a contradiction between this prescription and other prescriptions, which result from the same foundation.

Abstemiousness, — well, shall we not eat, and shall we become incapable of serving men? Not to kill animals, — shall we let them eat us up? Not to drink wine, — shall we not go to communion, not be cured with wine? Not to resist evil with evil, — well, shall we allow a man to kill himself and others?

The discovery of these contradictions shows only that a man who is busy with it wants not to follow the moral rule.

It is all the same story: for the sake of one man, who has to take wine as a cure, we are not to oppose drunkenness. For the sake of one fictitious violator we are to kill, execute, and put in prison.

The death of children from the common point of view: Nature tries to give better ones, and, seeing that the

world is not yet ready for them, takes them back. But she must try, in order to be able to go ahead. So the swallows who return too early freeze to death; but they must none the less return.

But this is a common, bad reflection. A rational reflection is this, that he (the dead child) has done God's work, — the establishment of the kingdom of God through the increase of love, — more than many who have lived half a century, and more.

Love, love him who has hurt you, whom you have condemned, have not loved, — and everything which concealed his soul from you will disappear, and you will, as through fresh water, see at the bottom the divine essence of his love, and you will not have to forgive him, and it will be impossible for you to do so, — you will have to forgive yourself only for not having loved God in him in whom He was, and for not having seen Him on account of your lack of love.

People who have not risen to life are always busy with preparations for life, but there is no life: they are busy with eating, sleeping, studying, resting, the continuation of the race, education. One thing is lacking, — life, the growth of their life.

Yes, our business is like that of a nurse, — to bring up what is entrusted to us, — our life.

And let no one repeat the favourite trite remark that to bring up our life is egoism.

To bring up our life is to serve God. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.

When you see the advantage of your neighbour and do not see the advantage for any one from your growth, and

you have to choose, always choose the growth of your life, because the advantage of your neighbour is *always* doubtful, while the good of the growth of your life is *always* indubitable.

Just as aimless and unknown sufferings seem incomprehensible and receive an explanation only outside of conditions of life visible to us, so also the aimless, to our view useless good and the unknown, but indubitable growth of our growth prove to us that our life is not limited to visible conditions. In this, it seems to me, lies the solution of that impassioned, insuperable egoism which forms our life. I can love only myself, but, in order not to suffer from the love of self I must find and secrete in myself what is worthy of love, — God. Is it not for that reason that it says: Thou shalt love the Lord *thy* God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind?

This, people will say, is egoism. And the good of men, they will say, is utilitarianism. Either is incorrect; either is true; and one proves the other. Inside himself a man will find a meaning only in the growth of life. Outside of himself he will find only what establishes the kingdom of God upon earth. One inevitably coincides with the other. Men, according to their strength, are given the guidance of one or the other: both lead to the same goal.

He who has not attained the consciousness of life in growth is guided by what contributes to the good of men. Just as it is precisely the same whether a figure is painted black on white, or whether the white is left on the black, — the contours will be the same.

It is not a metaphor to say that a man who does not bring up his life has no life. Such a man indeed has no life as there is no life in a tree which drops its old bark, but does not produce a new one, as there is none in the animal which is decomposing, and not assimilating food.

The whole carnal life of the organism, with its food, growth, continuation of race, is in relation to the true (growing) life nothing but a destructive process.

You write that, having followed my advice and having, as you write, busied yourself with self-perfection, you felt that you were subjecting yourself to a great danger of living your life egoistically and, therefore, vainly, and that you escaped this danger by having ceased to care for your moral perfection, for the elucidation of your consciousness of the truth, and for the establishment of your life in conformity with this consciousness, and busied yourself with the improvement, enlightenment, and correction of others.

I think that the danger which frightened you was merely an imaginary one, and that, by continuing to elucidate this consciousness and arranging your life in conformity with this consciousness, you did not at all run the risk of leading an idle life, which would be useless to others.

I think the very reverse: there is no possibility of enlightening and correcting others, without having enlightened and corrected ourselves to the utmost limits; indeed, it is impossible to enlighten and correct ourselves individually, for every true enlightenment and correction of ourselves inevitably enlightens and corrects others, and it is this means alone which actually enlightens and corrects others, just as the burning fire cannot light up and warm only the object which is consumed in it, but inevitably lights up and warms objects about itself, but only when it burns itself.

You write: "Will my becoming better do any good to my brother?" This is as though a digger should say, "Will my sharpening the spade advance my work?" Nothing but the sharpening will advance it. But here the comparison is not complete: the enlightenment and

correction of others, as I said before, takes place only through the enlightenment and correction of oneself.

I do not say that what you are doing, staying in military service, and teaching the soldiers the rudiments, etc., is bad. This is unquestionably better than to teach soldiers cruelty and lying, and to beat them. But what is bad for you is this, that, knowing the evil and falseness of military service, with its deceptions, oath, and discipline, you continue to serve. And what is bad is not so much the fact itself that you are serving, as your reflections that, though continuing to serve, you are doing what is right.

I understand that there may be conditions of your relations with your relatives, of your past, of your foibles, which deprive you of your strength to do what you consider to be right, — to leave military service; from weakness we all more or less depart from that ideal, that truth, which we know; but what is important is not to distort truth, to know that I have departed from it, that I am sinful, bad, and without cessation to strive for it and to be ready at any moment, as soon as the obstacles have weakened, to walk upon its path.

A man moves forward, lives, and serves men, only when he knows how much he has departed from truth, and so considers himself to be bad. But if he seeks a justification for his sin and is satisfied with himself, he is dead. But one must not be satisfied with oneself, while doing military service, knowing that its aim is execution and murder, its means servile obedience to every man higher in rank, who to-morrow may command me to kill innocent people, and its conditions — not only idleness, but also a useless waste of the nation's best forces and the deception and corruption of the nation.

How often have I been surprised and pained to see that what is so clear to me (and not simply clear, but

what I live by), namely, what God's will consists in and its fulfilment, seems to others obscure and doubtful. I cannot help but think, as I look at the workmen in the iron foundry on the Túla road, that each of these workmen is given a definite work, which he must do. I see the same in the whole of Nature: every plant, every animal, is predestined for some work, and for this purpose each of them is given corresponding organs, — roots, leaves, feelers, smelling, and so forth. I see, besides, man to whom, in addition to the organs which are given to an animal, there is given reason, which demands of him that he invest all his acts with a meaning. This reason has to be satisfied and must show man what he should do in conformity with this reason. Thus men have always lived, being guided by their reason. To live while being guided by our reason means to live while doing God's will, — just as for an animal to live while being guided by its organs and instincts means to live while doing God's will.

They retort to me that one regards as God's will the flying at each other's throats, another — the eating of Christ's body in the shape of little bits of bread, another — the certainty that he was saved by Christ's blood, — and this difference in the comprehension of God's will seems to trouble men, as though they have to be guided by somebody else's reason, and not by their own. The question is not as to what Dragomírov considers God's will to consist in (besides, it is uncertain whether Dragomírov considers God's will to consist in flying at each other's throats. . . . It is possible to say one thing, and in reality to believe in something else, — words do not prove anything), but as to this, what I, making use of my reason, regard as God's will, that is, what meaning I ascribe to my existence in this world?

There must be a meaning, just as there must be a meaning in those motions which a workman makes in

a foundry. The whole forward motion of human life consists in passing from a lower to a higher comprehension of life, — from flying at the throat to the bits of bread, from the bits of bread to redemption, from redemption to the comprehension of the Christian moral and social teaching.

In this do I understand the meaning of life to consist: in the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth, that is, in substituting a loving and fraternal cohabitation of men for one of violence, cruelty, and hatred. The means for attaining this is personal perfection, that is, the substitution of a loving ministration to others for our egoistical tendencies, as, indeed, it says in the Gospel, that this is the whole law and the prophets: to do to others as we would that others should do to us. In this do I see the meaning of life, than which I see nothing higher, and I do not always live in the name of this meaning, but frequently, and the older I grow the more frequently, I accustom myself to live in the name of it, and, the more I get used to it, the more joyous, free, independent of everything external my life is, and the less terrible is life to me. . . .

Every man arrives at the truth in his own way; but I can say this much: what I write is not words, but I live by it, am happy in it, and shall die with it.

OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE

(1) Life is the consciousness of the invariable spiritual principle as manifested within the limits which demarcate this principle from everything else.

(2) The limits of this principle as demarcated from everything else present themselves to man as his moving body and as that of other beings.

(3) Separateness, non-confluence, impermeability of one

being by another can present itself only as matter moving independently of the motion of other beings.

(4) And as corporeality and space, so also motion and time are only conditions of the possibility of representing the separateness of our spiritual being from all the rest, that is, from the unlimited, non-corporeal, non-spatial and non-moving, non-temporal spiritual being.

(5) And so our life presents itself to us as the life of the spatial body moving in time.

(6) It appears to us that our body, forming one part of the corporeal world, unlimited in space, originating from parents, ancestors, who lived before us in infinite time, receives its beginning in the mother's womb, is born, grows, develops, then weakens, dries up, and dies, that is, loses its former corporeality, passing into another, stops moving, and — dies.

(7) In reality our true life is formed only by the consciousness of that spiritual being which is separated from all the rest and is included within the limits of body and motion.

(8) This spiritual being is always equal to itself and is subject to no changes; but to us it seems that it grows and expands in time, that is, moves. But what moves is the limits in which the spiritual beings are. This seems so to us, just as it seems to us that the moon is moving, when the clouds pass over it.

(9) Life is life, only when consciousness is manifested, — when consciousness comes out from its limits. It always exists. Those intervals of the apparent absence of consciousness seem to us so only when we look at the motion of the limits of consciousness in other beings. But when we look within ourselves, we know that consciousness is one and unchangeable, that it does not begin nor end.

(10) Life at first appears to man as materially spatial and moving, temporal. Man recognizes at first as his life

those limits which to him appear as moving matter, which separate him from everything, and assumes that his life is materially spatial and automatically temporal, and in the motion of this matter in time he sees life. In the interruption of the motion of this matter he sees the cessation of his life.

(11) In this conviction man is supported by his observation of other men, who constantly present themselves to him as material in space and moving in time. The observation of the continuity of the motion of matter in other beings causes a man to think that his life, too, is uninterruptedly moving in time, though inwardly he not only does not experience this uninterruptedness of motion, but, on the contrary, experiences a motionless consciousness, always equal to itself, which only for external observation is divided by intervals of sleep, insanity, passions, — but in reality is all one.

(12) Thus people ascribe two different meanings to "life." One meaning is the concept of matter in motion, separate from everything else, which by man is cognized as self, and the second, — a motionless spiritual being, always equal to itself, which man recognizes as self.

(13) These concepts seem to be different, but in reality they are not two concepts, but one: the concept of cognizing oneself as a spiritual being enclosed within limits. The recognition of the spatial and temporal existence of the separate being as life is only the result of insufficient thinking. The recognition of oneself as a being separate from everything else is possible only for a spiritual being. And so life is always the life of the spiritual being. But the spiritual being can be neither spatial nor temporal.

(14) And so the recognition of the material temporal existence as all life is an error of thought, a recognition of the part for the whole, of the consequences for the cause, — is just such an error of thought as the recognition

of the falling stream of water, and not of the river, as the force which moves the mill-wheel.

(15) The distinction between the recognition of the spiritual unchangeable principle, and not its manifestation within those limits in which it is manifested, as life has always been made by all the religious teachers. On this elucidation of the difference between the two concepts of life is based the Gospel teaching about the true life, — the life of the spirit and the false life, — the carnal, the temporal life.

(16) This elucidation is very important, because from the consciousness that the true life is contained only in the spiritual being results all that which is called virtue and which gives the highest good to men. From this consciousness results that which forms the foundation of all the virtues, — results love, that is, the recognition of the life of all the beings of the world through oneself.

(17) From this same cognition, which is nothing but what we call conscience, results continence, fearlessness, self-renunciation, because only with continence, fearlessness, self-renunciation, is possible the fulfilment of the fundamental demand of consciousness, — the recognition of other beings through oneself, that is, love.

(18) A man who has recognized his life is (I believe Pascal said so) like a slave who suddenly discovers that he is a king.

The strength of the governments is in this, that in their hands is the self-feeding circle of power: the false doctrine produces power, and power gives the possibility of disseminating nothing but the false teaching, removing everything which is contrary to it, which arraigns it.

No matter how the guard and the army may be bribed and stultified, they now none the less consist of the same men whom this very guard oppresses and compels to do

evil. Besides, there are not many in this guard. They form a hundredth, at the most a fiftieth, of the whole nation; but it is also the nation now. And so the power of the governments is now no longer based on force, as was the case formerly, but on deceit.

Men with a calm conscience, as it were, not only at the request of the authorities become policemen, collectors of taxes, and soldiers, but of their own free will become policemen, examining magistrates, prosecutors, soldiers, generals, ministers, kings, and, as it were, with a calm conscience, — at least with external complete self-confidence, — busy themselves with taking away from people their last cow for taxes, which will be used for luxury and murder; or they put men into prisons, and torment and execute them; or invent and prepare means of murder; and amidst poor people own property and lands taken from them, and seem to be proud of this.

The so-called educated people, — those who ought to give an example of that relation to violence which is proper to a rational being, — the learned, liberal, revolutionary men even, discuss, condemn, preach liberty, the dignity of man. But that is so only so long as these educated people are not whistled for to go under the yoke; and then all discussions and all liberalism and all talks about liberty come to an end; and he is dressed up in a gaudy livery, is given a gun or a sword in his hands, and a sergeant commands him to run, and jump, and stand still, and whirl around, and put on his cap, and bow, and shout hurrah at the sight of the Tsar, and, above all, be prepared, at the command of this sergeant, to kill his own father, and he, — a liberal, a learned man, — according to the law of evolution, — jumps and bows to whom he is commanded to bow, and shouts hurrah, and is prepared to kill whomever he is commanded to kill.

Thus the same people, the cultured, for whom it would be most natural to strive to bring life into harmony with their consciousness, are mainly busy confusing and contorting this consciousness.

It is obvious to them that it is absolutely unnecessary to discuss the question of resisting evil and of how it is decided by Christianity. All that is mysticism. It is necessary to do all this, that is, to be a submissive slave of slaves.

For an unawakened man the governmental power is certain sacred institutions forming the organs of a live body, an indispensable condition of the life of men. For an awakened man it is badly erring men, who ascribe to themselves a certain fantastic significance, which has no rational justification whatever, and who, by means of violence, execute their wishes. Senates, synods, courts, the administration, — all that is for an awakened man erring and for the most part bribed men, who do violence to other men, just such men as those robbers who seize men on the highways and do violence to them. The antiquity of this violence, the dimensions of the violence, its organization, cannot alter the essence of the thing.

For an awakened man there is not what is called government: and so there are no justifications for all the acts of violence committed in the name of the government; and so there can be for him no participation in them.

Governmental violence will not be destroyed by external means, but only by the consciousness of men awakened to the truth.

Suffering from sickness and interference with occupations, which we experience from sickness, are not due to sickness, but to our relation to death.

If we recognize that death is a necessary end of our carnal existence, and that in this imminent end, as also

in the continuation of this life, there is nothing, either bad or good, the sufferings will cease being painful and will not interfere with life.

If a man did not in the least doubt the indestructibility of his life after death, all diseases would present themselves to him only as conditions of a transition from one form of life to another, — a form rather desirable than otherwise, — and then he would bear the pain caused by disease in the same way as we bear pain caused by tense labour, which we know will end in something good. And there would be no suffering and no consciousness of an interruption of activity, for during the pain we should have a definite activity — that of preparing ourselves for the new state.

We are all able, though only in part, to experience that this is so.

But how can it help but be terrible for people to suffer, when their whole life consists in attempts at realizing their wishes in this world in the future, in the constant desire that the future may come as quickly as possible, and when they none the less know that at the end of this future stands that of which they are so afraid that they dare not even think of it, — death? How can they help but suffer, since they are constantly in this inner contradiction, when a disease comes which, like all diseases, brings death with it?

From this arises the painfulness of the sufferings. From this also comes what we call the cessation of all life from disease.

Oh, if we did not for a moment forget death, into which we may slip any minute! If we only remembered that we are not standing on a level plane (if we think that we are, then it only appears that he who has gone has disappeared suddenly, and we are afraid that we, too, shall disappear suddenly), but are sliding, constantly colliding,

overtaking, and being overtaken, down there, behind the curtain, which conceals from us those who go away from us and will conceal us from the rest!

If we always remember this, it is so easy and so joyous to live and slide together down that incline, in the power of that God, in whose power we have been and will be later and for ever.

Frequently I think well, but I think without death, — and this is a frivolous and empty thought. Frequently I live well, but I live without the expectation of death, — and this is a frivolous and empty life.

Life is the talent given me for increase. It is possible to think and live with death only when we remember that our one business is not to write something, to aid some one, to do something outside of ourselves, but only to increase our life, in order to give it back to the Master, when He takes it, better, larger, than when it was given to me.

This is strange only when the increase of life may be imagined outside of love of men and, therefore, outside of serving them. But increase and serving are one and the same, except that they are viewed from different sides.

I know that you have that which supports you in your grievous moments of life, — faith in eternal life, a tiny part of which is formed by this life, which is of importance only, in order that we may not be false to what we recognize to be God's will. I know this, but I know also that it is impossible for us always to maintain ourselves in the spirit in which we see and remember only God and His law; I know that after a spiritual exaltation there are falls. In these minutes of spiritual fall I would like to be with you, to suffer together with you and rise with you and help one another.

In grievous moments I am always mindful of Christ's

words, "Have I not come for this hour?" And these words always support me, if I happen to think of them in time. Grievous minutes must be dear to us, because, to live through them properly, we have lived and gathered strength during all our preceding life. "He that suffereth unto the end shall be saved."

What has always helped me very much is the thought that what is hard for me is the very step which I have reached and on which I have put my foot, in order to rise higher.

Thank God, I live well, that is, better than before: there is more concord and love of men and more obedience to God's will. Lack of love is due to nothing but disobedience.

I carefully read both your letters twice and understand everything separately, but fail to comprehend the general spirit of the whole, — I do not understand the motive of your dissatisfaction. You say: "Union, but union is possible only in the truth." To find union with men, it is not necessary to go to meet men, but for all to go toward God or truth. Only there is union, and not with those with whom I want or propose to have a union, but with those who arrived there whither I myself went.

I represent to myself the world as an enormous temple, in which the light falls from above, in the very middle. For us to meet, we must all go toward this light, and, arriving from all sides, we shall meet there with entirely unexpected people. And this is joy.

It is this union that we ought to search for, and we ought to search for it with these means, and it is impossible for us to help one another. What you say about the necessity of the form of life is quite true, but it is not enough to say "necessity," — it is necessary to say "the

inevitableness" of the form. If one lives separately, or people live together materially, or only spiritually (as I understand that I am living with all and you with the rest), there certainly is a form of this life. And it is very inconvenient and even harmful to look at this form, to define it. Let others look at the form and define the form in which I live, but I have to live.

Again you do not say well that, when a beggar comes, there is no time to inquire whether love is increased, and so forth. You know that I did not say so for that purpose, but in order, if there is any doubt in one's activity, to apply this measure to such an activity. And so I will say, taking your own example, that if a pail is filled with annoyance, or he whose pail is being filled does not expect a pail, but a small measure, and receives it with annoyance, such an activity is not correct.

I cannot understand why you are dissatisfied with yourself and with others, and what you want. It seems to me that there ought to be dissatisfaction with oneself, — not with others, and I frequently console myself with the fact that I am constantly dissatisfied with myself, — since I am not yet entirely lost; but I know what I am dissatisfied with, — with my definite abominations, from which I cannot be liberated by anybody's aid, and the work over which forms my life. I do not trouble myself, however, about the circle in which I live, about my external conditions of life, because I know by experience that this or that circle, these or those conditions, result from my greater or lesser nearness to Christ, to truth. I live as I do, not because a ray of light reached me under grievous circumstances (as I used to think), but because I am bad. In proportion as I shall be and am better, the circle, too, and the external conditions are better. If I were a saint, and the circle and the external conditions were ideal, I should be living as I present to myself the life of a disciple of Christ, — a beggar, a vagabond, a

servant of all men, — and I still do not despair to attain this, because it is all in my power. It is also impossible to become better, to stand nearer to truth in consequence of external conditions, just as it is impossible to sit astride a stick and raise oneself by grasping the stick. The external conditions, the form of life, union, — all that is the result of an inner perfection, — an approach to Christ: "Seek ye the kingdom of God which is within you, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Maybe I am mistaken and reply to what you did not ask. If so, forgive me. I wrote loving, thinking of you, and wishing, if possible, to be useful to you.

. . . The difficulty, which you met with in the answer of the young man who would like to follow the dictates of his conscience and at the same time feels the impossibility of forsaking and grieving his mother, is one I know, and I have several times had occasion to reply to it.

Christ's teaching is not a doctrine which demands certain acts, — it does not demand anything of those who want to follow it. It consists, as the word "Gospel" (the announcement of the good) indicates, in the knowledge of man's true good. The moment a man has come to understand and is permeated with the consciousness that his true good, the good of his eternal, that is, his true, life, the one which is not limited to this world, consists in the doing of God's will, and that to commit murder and prepare oneself for murder — as do those who become military men — is contrary to this will, no consideration can compel this man to act contrary to his true good. If there is an internal struggle, and if, as in the case of which you speak, family considerations are uppermost, this serves as a proof that Christ's true teaching is not understood by him who is unable to follow it. This only proves that he would like to appear a Christian, but is

not such in reality. And so I find it useless and frequently even harmful to preach certain acts or abstinence from acts, like the refusal to do military service, and so forth. All the acts should arise, not from a desire to follow certain rules, but from a complete impossibility of acting differently. And so, when I find myself in a situation such as the one is in which you found yourself before this young man, I always advise people to do everything that is demanded of them, — to enter military service, serve, swear, and so forth, — if only this is morally possible for them to do; not to abstain from anything, unless this becomes morally as impossible as it is impossible for a man to lift up a mountain or rise in the air. I always tell them: "If you want to refuse to do military service and to bear all the consequences of this refusal, try to attain that degree of certainty and lucidity when it shall be as impossible for you to take an oath and go through the manual of arms as it is now for you to strangle a child or do something like it. But if that is possible for you to do, do it, because it is better that there should be one more soldier than one more hypocrite or apostate from the teaching, as happens with those who undertake things that are above their strength. This is why I am convinced that the Christian truth cannot be disseminated by the preaching of certain external acts, as is done in the pseudo-Christian religions, but only through the destruction and dethronement of the offences, and especially through the conviction that man's one true good is contained in the doing of God's will, in which lies man's law and destiny.

At the moment of my writing two young men of my friends are locked up — one in prison, the other in an insane asylum — for having refused to do military service. One of these is a young Moscow artist. I am trying to influence him as little as possible in his refusal, because I know that, to bear all the trials which await

him, he needs strength, which cannot come from without; he needs the firm conviction that his life has no other meaning than that which consists in doing the will of Him who sent him here, but this conviction is formed within. I can help its formation, but I cannot give it: more than anything else I am afraid of making him believe that he has this conviction, when he does not have it. . . .

. . . The idea of a military strike has already been announced at the last socialistic congress but one, by one of your countrymen, whom I respect very much, though I have forgotten his name (Domela, I think). When you write again, let me have the pleasure of hearing something about this socialist, who is so remarkable for his activity. . . .

. . . The most remarkable thing about this movement is this, that the masses are on the side of the students, or, rather, on the side of the expression of dissatisfaction.

Working people and students come to me and write to me, and I tell them all: For the good of men we need first their union among themselves, and so, the more communion, the more mutual sympathy there is, the better. But we must unite not in the name of hostility, but in the name of mutual love; if this union seems dangerous and harmful to some people, so much the worse for them. We invite them to this communion. . . .

. . . There is one thing I may say in my name, and that is, that making Russian people — policemen, Cossacks, and soldiers — so bestial that they commit acts which are contrary even to their nature and their religious beliefs, is very important, and we cannot look too seriously upon it: we must try to investigate, promulgate, and understand its causes.

THE DEMANDS OF LOVE

(From a diary)

IMAGINE some people, for completeness' sake, a man and a woman — husband and wife, brother and sister, father and daughter, mother and son — of the wealthy classes, who have come to a vivid realization of the sinfulness of their life of luxury and idleness amidst the poverty of the masses that are crushed by labour, and who have left the city, have given away their surplus, or in one way or another have rid themselves of it, have left for themselves, say, 150 paper roubles per year, or have even not left anything for themselves, but earn the amount by some labour, — let us say, by painting on china, translating good books, — and live in the country, in the centre of a Russian village, having rented or bought a hut, working their garden with their own hands, attending to bees, and at the same time giving aid to the villagers, — medical, as much as they know of it, and educational, by teaching the children, writing letters and petitions, and so forth.

It would seem there cannot be anything better than such a life. But this life will be or become a hell, if these people are not going to dissemble and lie, if they are going to be sincere. If these people have renounced all advantages and joys, all the adornments of life, which city and money gave them, they did so only because they recognize men to be their equal brothers in the sight of God, — not equal in abilities and worth, if you so wish,

but equal in their rights to life and to everything which it can give them.

If there can be any doubt as to the equality of men, when we view them as adults with a separate past for every one, there can be no such doubt when we see them as children. Why will this child have all the care, all the aid of knowledge for his physical and mental development, while that charming boy with the same or even better promise will become a rachitic, degenerate half-cripple, for the want of milk, and will remain an ignorant, savage man, fettered by superstitions, — nothing but a coarse labouring force?

If these people have left the city and have settled in the country, as they have, they have done so only because they believe in the brotherhood of men, not only in words, but also in fact, and wish, if not to realize it in their lives, at least to work for its realization. And this attempt at its realization must, if it is sincere, lead them to a terrible, hopeless situation.

With their habits of order, comfort, and chiefly cleanliness, acquired in childhood, they came to the country, where they hired or bought a hut, cleaned it of vermin, perhaps themselves papered it, brought a remnant of their furniture, not luxurious, but necessary furniture, — an iron bed, a safe, a small writing-desk. And there they are living. At first the peasants feel shy in their presence: they expect that they, like all rich people, will by means of violence defend their property, and so do not approach them with requests and demands. But slowly the mood of the new inhabitants is becoming clear: they themselves offer their services gratis, and the boldest and most forward of the peasants find out through experience that these new people do not refuse anything and that it is possible to get things out of them.

And they begin to put forth all kinds of demands, and these demands keep growing and growing.

There begins something like the pouring out and levelling of a heaping mass of grain, until no heap is left.

There begin not only exactions, but even natural demands that that which is superfluous, as compared with what others have, be distributed among them; and not only are there demands, but those who have settled in the country and who are all the time in close relations with the masses feel an inevitable necessity of giving their surplus to those who are in dire need. Not only do they feel the necessity of giving up their surplus, until they have left what all have, that is, what the average has, — but there does not exist a definition of this average, of what all ought to have; and they cannot stop, because there is always a crying want all about them, and they have a surplus, as compared with this want: it would seem that they ought to retain for themselves a glass of milk, but Matréna has two children, one, at the breast, who does not find any milk in the mother's breast, and the other, of two years of age, who is beginning to grow feeble. It would seem right to retain a pillow and a coverlet, in order to fall asleep under habitual conditions after a day of labour, but a sick man is lying on a lousy caftan and is freezing at night, covering himself with a gunny-bag. It would seem right to retain the tea, the food, but it becomes necessary to give all that to some feeble and old pilgrims. It would seem right at least to retain cleanliness in the house, but there come some beggar boys, and they are allowed to stay overnight, and fill the room with lice, which the people had just rid themselves of, when they returned from a patient.

It is impossible to stop, and where should one stop?

Only those who do not know at all that feeling of the consciousness of the brotherhood of men, in consequence of which these people went to the country, or who are so accustomed to lying that they do not notice the difference between the lie and the truth, will say that there is

a limit, at which it is possible and necessary to stop. The point is, that there is no such limit, that the feeling in the name of which this thing is being done is such that it has no limit, — that if it has a limit, it only means that this feeling never existed, but there was only hypocrisy.

I continue to present these people to myself. They have worked a whole day; they return home; they have no longer a bed or a pillow; they sleep on straw, which they have fetched for themselves; and now, having eaten a piece of bread, they lie down to sleep. It is autumn, — it is raining and snowing. There is a knock at the door. Can they refuse to open it? A man who is drenched and in a fever enters. What is to be done? Shall he be allowed to lie down on the dry straw? There is no more dry straw. And they have either to drive the sick man away, or let him lie down on the floor, wet as he is, or give him their straw, and themselves lie down with him, since it is necessary to sleep somewhere. More than that: there comes a man whom you know as a drunkard and a dissipated man, whom you have helped several times, and who every time spent in drinks everything you gave him; he comes now, with trembling jaws, asking you to give him three roubles, which he stole and spent in drinks, and which, if he does not return them, will cause him to be put in prison. You say that you have only four roubles and that you need that sum for a payment which you have to make to-morrow. Then the visitor says: "Yes, it is all nothing but talk; when it comes to acts, you are like the rest: let him whom we call our brother perish, so long as we remain whole."

How is one to act in this case? What is to be done? To put the feverish man on the damp ground, and themselves to lie down on dry straw, is only worse, — you will not fall asleep. To put him on your bed and lie down with him, — you will only be infected with lice and

with typhus. To give the beggar the last three roubles, means to be left without bread for to-morrow. Not to give it to him, means, as he says, to renounce everything in the name of which one lives. If it is possible to stop here, why not have stopped earlier? What sense was there in helping people at all? Why give away one's property, why leave the city? Where is the limit? If there is a limit to the work you are doing, the whole work has no sense, or has only one terrible sense of hypocrisy.

What is to be done here? Not to stop, means to ruin one's life, be covered with lice, grow sick, and die, and, apparently, without any use. To stop, means to renounce everything in the name of which all this was done, in the name of which all the good was done. And it is impossible to renounce it, because it was not invented by me or by Christ that we are brothers and must serve one another; that is all so, and it is impossible to tear this consciousness out of the heart of man, when it has entered it. What is to be done? Is there no other way out?

And so let us suppose that these people, without getting frightened at the situation in which they are placed by the necessity of sacrifice, which leads to inevitable death, have decided that their condition is due to the fact that the means with which they have come to the aid of the people are too small, and that this would not have happened, that they would do more good, if they had more money. And let us suppose that these men have found the sources of aid, have collected enormous sums of money, and have begun to bear aid. Not a week would pass but what the same thing would have to be repeated. Very soon all the means, no matter how great they were, would be poured into those hollows which are formed by poverty, and the situation would remain the same.

But maybe there is still a third way out. There are some people who say that it exists and consists in contributing to the enlightenment of people, when this inequality will be destroyed.

But this way out is too obviously hypocritical: it is impossible to enlighten a populace that is any minute on the brink of death from starvation. The insincerity of the men who preach this is, above all else, to be seen from the mere fact that a man who is striving to establish this equality, even by means of science, cannot help but maintain this inequality with his whole life.

But there is a fourth way out: it consists in contributing to the destruction of all those causes which produce the inequality, — in contributing to the destruction of the violence which produces it.

And this way out cannot help but occur to those sincere people who in their life will try to realize their consciousness of the brotherhood of men.

"If we cannot live here, among these people, in the country," those people whom I have imagined will be obliged to say to themselves, "if we are placed in such a terrible situation that we must inevitably grow sick, be covered with lice, and die a slow death, or renounce the one moral foundation of our life, this is due to the fact that wealth is collected in the hands of some, while others are in distress; this inequality is due to violence; and since the basis of everything is violence, we must fight against it." Only the destruction of this violence and of the slavery resulting from it can make possible such a ministration to men that the sacrifice of one's life shall not be inevitable.

But how is this violence to be destroyed? Where is it? It is in the soldier, in the policeman, in the elder, in the lock, which locks my door. How can I struggle against them? Where, in what?

Here are people who all live by violence, and who

struggle against violence and with violence struggle against violence.

But for a sincere man this is impossible. To oppose violence to violence means to put new violence in the place of the old. To help by means of enlightenment, which is based on violence, means the same. To collect money, which is acquired through violence, and to use it in aiding men who are deprived of their share through violence, means with violence to cure wounds which are produced by violence.

Even in the case which I represent to myself, — not to let the sick man in, not to let him lie down on my bed, and not to give the three roubles, because I can by force retain the money, there is also violence. And so the struggle with violence does not for a man of our society, who wishes to live fraternally, exclude the necessity of giving up his life, of becoming covered with lice, and of dying, — but withal, fighting violence, not with the sermon of violence, but with the arraignment of violence, and, above all, with the example, not of violence, but of sacrifice. No matter how terrible and difficult may be the position of a man who is living a Christian life amidst a life of violence, he has no other way out but struggle and sacrifice, — and sacrifice until the end.

We must see the abyss which separates the vermin-ridden, starved millions of people from the overfed, lace-wearing other people; and to fill it up we need sacrifices, and not that hypocrisy with which we now try to conceal from ourselves the depth of this abyss. A man may not find sufficient strength in himself to throw himself into this abyss, but not one man who seeks life can avoid it. We may not want to go into it; but let us know and say so, and not deceive ourselves, not dissemble.

Yes and no, this abyss is not at all so terrible. And if it is, the terrors awaiting us on the path of worldly life are more terrible.

There are fewer chances of dying from lice, the plague, or want, in helping people and giving everything we have to them, than of dying in manœuvres, in war.

These lice and the black bread and want seem so terrible to us. The bottom of want is not deep, and frequently — like the boy who in terror passed a night hanging down from a projection in the well, into which he had fallen — we are afraid of the imaginary depth and the water: one foot below the boy there was a dry bottom.

But we must not depend on this bottom, — we must march on toward death. Only that love is love for which there is no end to sacrifices, — until death itself.

TOLSTÓYISM

(From his diary of the year 1897)

I WAS glad to have had an opportunity of expressing myself and making it clear to myself that it is a great and gross mistake to talk of Tolstóyism, to seek my guidance, to ask for my solution of questions.

There never has been such a thing as my teaching; there is the one eternal, universal teaching of the truth, which for me, for us, is expressed in the Gospels with particular clearness. This teaching calls man to the recognition of his filial relation to God, and so of his freedom, or his slavery (call it as you will), — the freedom from the influence of the world, and the slavery to God, — to His will; and as soon as a man has come to understand this teaching, he freely enters into an immediate communion with God, and he has nothing to ask any one about.

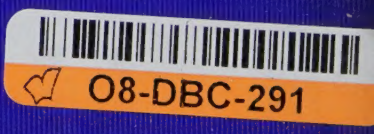
It is like rowing on a river which spreads beyond the current. So long as a man is not in the middle current, but in the calm, he has to row himself, and here he may be guided by the direction of other men's rowing. There I, too, myself rowing toward the current, was able to guide people; but the moment we have entered the current, there is no guide, and there can be none. We are all borne down by the power of the current, all of us in one direction, and those who were behind us may be ahead of us.

If a man asks whither he should row, this proves that he has not yet entered the current, and that he whom he

asks is a poor guide, if he was not able to bring him to the current, that is, to that condition where it is impossible to ask, because there is no sense in asking. How can I ask whither I should row, when the current bears me with irresistible force in the direction which gives me joy?

People who submit to one guide, and believe and obey him, are certainly wandering in the dark, together with their guide.

THE END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